

CATERPILLAR 15/16  
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Jonathan Williams:

AN EPITAPH FOR LORINE NIEDECKER (1903 - 1970)

she seined words  
as others stars  
or carp

laconic as  
a pebble  
in the Rock River

along the bank  
where the peony flowers  
fall

her tall friend  
the pine tree  
is still there

to see



STEPHEN JONAS

SEVENTY FIVE POEMS &

A NARRATION

*These poems represent a collection Stephen Jonas arranged about a year and a half before his death, together with a gathering of other work made available by Gerrit Lansing (on behalf of the executors of the literary estate), to whom the editors are grateful for assistance and textual advice.*

## COMPLAINTE DE L'OUBLI DES MORTS

...man the dead  
 's in the boneyard  
 they don't get around  
 much anymore.

J. Laforgue

In a loft facing a parking lot  
 on a main drag of the tired  
 southend, lives my friend  
 the fellow artist      stumbling thru  
 dope-filled mornings he's  
                                  not ready for:  
 dried-up paint pots, brushes  
                                  stiff'ning has managed  
 (Mercury 'by nite') to avoid the eight to five  
 he produces us no picture.

Outside ghosts ply the streets  
                                  ring door bells where no one's home  
 winos with eyes for nickles & dimes  
                                  children like vomit rail  
                                  at the street corners      the sharps  
 & flats of their vagrancy  
 crumpled bags brown &  
                                  white emerge from the rooming  
 houses & disappear  
 around corners that indicate  
 nothing.

1965

## INVOCATION

O generation gone  
     thoroughly to seed  
 yr. legislators, yr. heads  
     of state  
                 a great informal  
 racket without in-  
                 struction in-  
 capable of re-  
     capitulation & no  
 distinction between  
     subject & object  
 suffices anymore  
 to distinguish time &  
     place  
 Long gaps appear in the  
     contours of the language  
 (as tho' a mere pencil could  
     indicate so much grief.)  
 A language whose word  
     of true meaning has been  
         severely lost.

*envoi*

O lady carved in rosewood  
     or set in alabaster  
 I pray you  
     make us again  
 the tall grasses  
     to bend & part  
 before your footfall.  
 teach us to sin  
     and not to sin.

## THE BANISHMENT

...they start out being  
     righteous & end up  
         irreligious. want God  
 on their postage stamps but w/a  
 mucilage that wont stick.  
 held her out of heaven by her hair  
     for the sake of domestic  
 tranquility, the all of which, I  
 suppose to defeat the  
 prerogatives of  
     Olympian C.I.A.'s.

1968

## A WIDOW'S LAMENT (afta the Chinese)

in the eighth luna month  
     you, mi lord departed  
 out thru the west gate.  
     the lazy flys  
 have come and gone  
     since last I had word  
 of you.  
     (heavy), i sit beneath the  
 rotten pear tree.  
 The Third Immortal Maiden foresaw  
     your return;  
                     hence,  
 i shall do my thread-work here  
     looking ever to the east  
                     lattice.

1961

## BACK 'O TOWN BLUES

There is a bourgeois dullness  
                   that settles plumb blank upon  
 the blobs of american cities

it is a dullness of locality  
 & to each city its own brand  
                   of *ennui*

i have felt it  
       so must have you  
 the traffic of a thorough-fare  
       moves left to right  
                               & right to left  
 thusly the faces in windows

                              move likewise  
 or they loiter abt stoops  
       or congregate  
 at the corner's intersections

(anticipating violence) what else  
 save read a book on the Index  
       or see a controversial movie?  
 dead tho' they move

                              like an Egyptian mummy  
 whose guts have been excerpted  
 i tell you

                  there is a bourgeois  
 dullness  
 that settles plumb blank upon  
 the blobs of american cities

FOLLOWING THE SAME ROUTE BUT AT A DIFFERENT PACE

... in some ways you do  
                     frankly astound me  
 now you take timmy  
             that's the next door cat:  
 four puffs of white feet  
             pads up and down  
 thru the dead leaves  
             stop a little here a  
                     little there to poke his  
 nose under then a pounce  
             to send the pigeons by  
 onto a great scurry of wing flaps  
             that take to the naked  
                                 branches above;  
 what could he find  
             there to interest him so?  
             I remember the area  
                     from last summer  
 --bare as a bone's ass  
             save for spots of grass  
                     & tree roots humps  
 from beneath  
  
             --back to the Greeks  
 who like the freudians  
             had a word for  
                                 everything  
 & Gertrude Stein noted:we do like  
             to call names. no  
             I want to be free  
                     uncategorized the--  
 X factor     the elusive neutron  
                     not to be tagd and  
             shut between musty volumes  
                     on shelves above  
 heads of bookworms  
             read but not quite "QUICK"  
 "the door"     (door halfclosed  
                     he makes it



the train(his) is waiting  
I continue as I was

1964

FRAGMENTUM, 1957

...did you ever hear  
the bronze Apollo  
cullen sing?

mighty lak a rose  
tho' not in that dey. Christ!  
those 'skeeters  
at Walden Pond

but they kept yellin':  
"Steve, it's row-mantick"  
but Wieners  
said nothin' that year for wrote

in his journal  
while i went  
quite frankly out of my wits  
assailin' jews w/ ovens

& the coons w/ White citizen's  
retaliations. well,  
it's still a free society,

ain't it?

1967

## THE OUTRAGED GENIUS

hopped-up  
     & juiced  
 you must have  
     a chune in yr head  
 (--staggers for the door  
     bounding into  
     chairs  
         other  
         patrons pur-  
 sued of their  
             abandond  
                 laughter  
     protestations of those  
 he missed  
     in his wake..)  
 --allow me  
     come i'll be yr Virgil  
 & together we'll get said  
         what must be  
 buggin' you  
     we'll start tonite  
 say an ερως for starter  
     --a few of yr  
         choice lyrics  
             for chaser  
 posterity will be at yr heels  
             (what'-R-yu  
                 sum kinna-nut?

1962

## A THEME

September

"and the scattered leaves of all  
the universe" lie - in  
unused crumples across the grass  
and benches green as once were they  
now the cessation of all  
creative activity  
startled from time to time by a wind  
that is moved by its passion  
a scene at once too studied and poetic  
to belong endured  
as it were some conversation  
that is flowing  
endlessly downhill  
the thoughts veer as the wind does

1960

AFTER PAUL VERLAINE

(& w/a blues refrain of Jimmy Witherspoon's)

rain pouring sadness upon the town  
 as the pain pours from my heart  
 seemingly, to never cease

*sometimes i get the blues when it rains*

pelting the grief w/in me  
 as it pelts the wilting leaves beneath  
 declining heads of flowers

*sometimes i get the blues when it rains*

what is this bottomless gulf  
 within heavy & deeper  
 than the open grave?  
 & i am borne upon this downpour of despair

*sometimes i get the blues when it rains*

falling, falling, it falls upon the eager  
 & upon the disenchanted, equally  
 as upon those who have lost their dead

*sometimes i get the blues when it rains*

oh rain, rain rain rain go away  
 from my door. i have enuf trouble  
 to last me all my days

*sometimes i get the blues when it rains*

## BLACKSTONE PARK

(Dans le vieux parc solitaire et glacé)

in this park of dilapidated times  
       where no one comes save  
                       the bums & those  
 who love beneath the vine or the rose

winos toss empty pints  
       on-to the half shell of  
 a no longer running fount  
 dry voices of castrated hopes

complain to a jagged moon  
                       in its final resolve  
 at the last bench of a row  
       two shadows equivocate

they have no sex nor time  
 their words are witherd grasses  
       beneath the shuddering night;  
 some old ecstasy performed for fools

who believe the words they've said  
                       when the wind is down  
 and the green innocence of death  
       stalks the place

with a rattle of two elevated cars  
       overhead      hang-dog  
 and headed for the suburbs

.....AN EAR INJURED BY HEARING THINGS  
 (after a statement of Jack Spicer's)

thoughts march  
 across the page  
 orderly  
 the mind  
 hems & haws  
 de-

fining the line a  
 metrical dance  
 not, I caution you  
 preconceived  
 free? only  
 the mind  
 violating  
 the law taking  
 exceptions to  
 create (never to  
 new laws (oh, no a  
 flexibility  
 it seeks  
 (tender vineshoots  
 from the old year's  
 vine stock(s)  
 ten-

tacles up  
 the wall feelers out to  
 the new ways  
 design?  
 an arrangement  
 of parts  
 mere-

ly particulars  
 of the Poem  
 traced (for the mind  
 sketches  
 technique?  
 long since  
 burrowd under  
 but' the pattern



's obvious as are  
markings on bird  
form? yes  
what else  
looming before you  
underbrush  
cleard that the spaces show  
clean thru  
to a finished what  
have you.

Spring 1961

# NO SAINTS IN 3 ACTS

the photograph is mostly  
flat 2 dimensional  
you name it  
at that a quick relief  
from the black & white  
conflict  
over the negative landscape  
into which no peasant  
(spade or other  
has entered in to  
arrange  
the disorder of the virgin  
or whatever  
lies unfurrowed behind  
the furrow'd brow

1959

## QUEST

what pulls out the poetic  
line  
is not whats in the head  
but whats not in the belly

the lean  
lines out

the cat faced  
hunter  
artist

crouched  
tense

image of the prey sketched already  
upon the

central forehead  
with the of course

detail'd  
overemphasized  
hips

1959

## ALTAR

She sits that  
         morning star upon my  
 lowest window pane proud  
 as would any Venus  
 The birds, meanwhile,  
         make busy with  
 their chirps of  
                                 hosannas  
 such consideration for the  
 on-coming light

1958

## THE SPRING &amp; SUMMER ANNUAL (1968)

critical times are these  
     when bad government prevails  
     the forces of light & darkness contend  
 for upper-hand, disturbing the elements;  
 in such time the right man will find  
     himself beneath the grass  
 w/ the birds

1968

## THE RETURN

Remembering  
     it is returning  
 somehow to the familiar.  
     In the interval  
 there has been a loss.  
     Alone  
 one suffers it.  
     Alone  
 --with his thoughts  
     locked out,  
 the old man is  
     with us no longer.  
 Impotent  
     what else is there for him  
 unless in old age he write it.  
 The birth of tragedy  
     remembered it is  
 all remembered  
     Unconscious the sea surge  
 will not let him forget  
     save death intercedes  
 putting an end to all tragedy.

LXXXIII

LESBIA mi praesente viro mala plurima dicit:

Lesbia puts me down in front of  
                                   her ole man. he so busy grinnin'  
 he misses the whole pitch:  
                                   hey, stupid wake up: if she wuz  
 cool she'd fergit it     callin' me names  
                                   like don't i know  
                                   the chick's hook'd on me , ya dig?  
 & can't quit it. it's just me ker  
                                   & my cool heater.

1967

XXXIII

O FVRVM optime balneariorum

Come my melopoantics letz rail at  
       & heap vituperations upon  
 that god-damnd ole clothers coping pimp  
                                   Vibennius who daily ex-  
 ercises his craft in the public baths  
                                   while his horny ass'd son  
                                   pushes clap in the showers.  
 we shall sing commiseration upon  
                                   the boths of their victims.

1967

## AFTER CATULLUS I

Rudolpho ( a which no gender  
                   'll fit) has taken  
 a black lover       to match  
                   favorably (we trust)  
                   his dirty *mutandi*.

1967

## COLLECTION OF DRIED PLANTS

...desire no praise  
                   from the hands of yr wigs  
 themselves apes  
                   of a rotten system; their minds :  
 the profound of polluted rivers;  
 legislators selected from  
                   amongst the filth  
                   littering the streets of yr cities;  
 you youth doom'd  
                   at their very nativity. it is upon  
 the heads of a farther posterity,  
                   i rest my case

1965

## DISCOURSE

In Plato's dialogues

Socrates spoke  
of that love enraging youth  
to exceed the speed limits  
set by law  
or when lacking motor vehicles they  
rape, (which is a joke) or plunder  
drug stores

cigarette or other  
vending machines  
for nickles & dimes which,  
if not in the meantime apprehended by  
the all efficient

local police, they  
lavish on teenage girls with snatches  
chokd full ov giggles. Properly channeld  
of course this energy could be

directed  
into color design if not  
to the arrangement of particulars  
in the pending,

eagerly anticipated,  
American Poem. But then  
he was an old man

when he spoke thus  
so why smite the breast

thinking to rebuke the soul. Besides  
his boys were

mostly fops imbued  
with their high toned *arete* which  
could never apply in this

our so late Republic where

dogs and cats stand,  
tails between their legs to await

the law of equal dispensation. It's as tho  
within the organic structure,  
gangrene has long set in.



## POEM

It's a dull poem  
     whose finish  
         is sex

& whose climax  
         is spoonful  
 of angelic

    gissom  
     flush'd down  
 the drain

        in a men's room  
 where hopeful in-  
         vitations come  
 at you from slabs of marble in-  
 viting

    Travel

69

    or trips around the world!  
 just call this below number  
         & we must assume  
                         centrally lo-  
 cated under 21  
         white males  
 & i'll be yr slave

1965

## POLEMIC

The rhythmic arrangement of  
verbal imagery,  
the which are the secrets of  
the poetic style.

This pruning down to eyelevel  
all fruit trees til  
what else is left  
save the imagination?  
another tree another part  
of the forest  
&(mostly out of bounds)mimesis:  
of dramatic 'illliteration' or  
impersonation. The  
uneducated(amathés) is not  
imitation but the sadly  
lack of music ...

1965

## SONG

if love could take back  
     one folly spent  
         i would  
 remit the whole year that  
     solitary recompense  
 ---fame, riches all  
 my heart desires  
     wrap up and  
                     deliver in one  
 special blow  
 to strike it rich  
                     is easy....

## LEAVES

are voices of  
 children           are they not too  
                     leaves?  
 the excitement of their laughter  
                     like leaves  
                     moving together  
 to no other purpose  
                     than this:  
 that they move laughingly .  
 the gamely sight  
                     of their laughter  
 provoking shade to  
                     light reflectors  
 here and far now  
                     this way then  
                                     that  
 not chiaroscuro  
                     no  
 not as subtle as all that  
                     no tensile light  
 dance  
                     this facing me  
                     tree with no  
                                     leaves  
 invoking reversals.

1959

## SONG II

when spring's done with  
    (whatever this  
        sometimes impossible  
    seemingly) this  
when spring is done with  
    this whatever  
        geologist.

even if what i  
imagine you to be,  
    be not  
my imaginings do  
not become necessarily  
    any he she or it

1959

## THE FABLE

that swan-like bee  
                     w/ hive  
 lending no part of itself  
                     to be seen, heard or felt,  
 it walks on velvet  
                     by no means im-  
                                     penetrable; strokes  
 & hand-drawn prints it  
 cannot con-  
                     ceive. there are at least  
 contro-  
                     vertible factors;  
 it solves as it goes.  
 unreason is no excuse. Poetry  
 like all art  
                     cannot be discerned  
 in an apple blossom.  
 one must wait perhaps until  
                     all returns are in. Adverse  
 factors dismissed or otherwise  
                     just  
                     ignored like the old Ford:  
 too tired to  
 eagerly await a new  
                     fate.

1960

## DILEMMA II

if you come right down to it the  
     hemmed-in Proteus the  
         lopsided whale  
             stranded on a California  
                 beachhead, people  
 milling about all  
         phenomena --  
 critical poem  
         saying the  
             upside-down cake  
         not in the sky that  
             canvas of surprise  
 no, hidden within sub-  
                     terranean  
         remoteness of human  
                     ingenuity  
 To save? again no  
         to venerate the  
 dastardly;  
         (that's innovation  
 without right.) the  
     minute is found within  
 the narrow confines of space  
 where the ever lurking  
         presence of Time: the  
 myriad colors with  
 grounded principles like  
     as Michael Angelo down  
         on all fours mixing  
         the Sistine ceiling with  
         universal dirt. unity? you say  
 yes, but where will you  
     find unity unless you  
 sacrifice space  
 that diction of rhetoricians  
         like a backslider with  
 double barrel'd nerve.  
         we lend encouragement after  
         the fact.

known? who  
 knows the Eternal outlaw  
 can safely say he  
 knows nothing.

1959

## SONG AFTER WALLER, HERRICK &amp; OTHERS

Go  
 tell her that waits  
 or him that bides  
 his time to cease  
 that coral lips to fade  
 and amber studs  
 shall lose their hold  
 that bind  
 you from that sacred  
 tryst  
 many the rotted bowl  
 that went unbowed  
 many the virginal  
 to rust  
 unplucked  
 but eye shall burn  
 what burning  
 mouth  
 surcease  
 Lust is for a time  
 but the time for you  
 is thyme for me.

1959

## GREEN

as the day  
 you were born  
 without leaves with-  
 out  
 stripped  
 barely  
 distinguishable  
 from other heathen  
 branches  
 baptised by understanding  
 the overfalling  
 showers falling  
 affectionately upon birches  
 boughs of  
 old family trees are  
 sentimental  
 attachments to  
 roots joined in  
 soil swollen clusters  
 of sublimation like  
 lines hidden  
 never washed  
 publicly but  
 bathed rumors  
 in clothes closets  
 behind doors of  
 juries  
 locked in  
 to keep out  
 the public-like  
 rain  
 endlessly falling  
 in January when hell  
 even the yellow  
 is an orange  
 hidden in trees  
 bathed in smog soaked  
 landscape  
 endlessly falling  
 and rising.



## MUSIQUE ANCIEN

music hath no power  
     that sensate can  
         no image that can  
 peel, the flayed flesh  
 the song is weak but  
         sweet  
                     thy image shall  
 not die by song  
 so long as flesh can  
                     peel & image  
 feel the song.

1959

## ENCHANTMENT

can too surprise you  
 arising from the sea where you  
 least expect to;  
                     the wind as you  
 expect  
         ignores it. these man-made  
 surprises --you might say  
         imagine that.  
 overworked can become,  
         but for the innoc-  
         uous, most repressive.  
 there are remedies: the I.B.M.,  
     the sewing machine the  
         block-and-tackle.

1959

## RECONCILIATION

Knowledge since there is  
                   nothing else  
 prediction tracing ahead of  
                   experience like  
 Pike peeking out the  
                   unknowable  
 like the ascertainable.

certainty is a sure  
                   road block--God  
 i would rather be  
                   some eastern emir  
 outworn; why  
 soothsayings wild that  
 secure from expressing  
                           surprise.

1959

## THE HERMIT

my pussy  
                   has never been to  
                   San Francisco tho'  
 I know others have,  
  
                   confined to the  
 apartment lest  
 she throw up kittens  
                   eats her fish in the kitchen  
 & makes her toilet in a box  
                   aslant my  
                           (partially conceal'd)  
 bookshelves!

1962



LA BAS

...surrounded by a host  
 of derangement...rabble  
 of narcotia, high church  
     names turn'd erotic,  
 their nymphomanias of in-  
     determinate sexes,  
     centaurs w/wings abt. their  
     thighs     rootless  
 & all desiring in six  
     nationalities; a few  
 take the cure of the freudian  
     mishap and re-  
 join the herd (white oxen) suicide  
 one or two     other, as if  
 in final desperation, embrace eastern  
     or near eastern  
                                     exotica (all of  
     which perused in haste) none  
 penetrate the petty like of our beings  
     here. Not to know  
     that is humanit-; but to pretend  
 you do & don't  
                     --this is hell.

1965

## STILE

I take after  
     that perhaps fabulous beast  
 who upon taking two steps  
     then covers four  
 but look more closely  
     into the deft mannir with  
 which I hold  
     O the egg shell  
     demitasse      two fingers  
 distending out one .  
     you can tell, w/a  
 faint smile, reading a man  
     whose been to The Well

1966

## SONG OF MYSELF

this man who wants to hire me  
     knows I'm a Poet  
  
 he does it out of sheer boredom  
 there is nothing between us.  
 his wife & children  
     strangers  
 he takes long rides alone in the car  
     bored w/ t.v.  
  
 well, I know what you're thinking  
     behind yr comfortable *intellectus*  
 & besides he is too old for all that  
  
 this man who wants to hire me  
     & knows I'm a Poet

1965

THE CAN BE LED BUT NOT COMMISSIONED TO KNOW

nothing prevails against  
 this overwhelming tide  
     of ignorance & human redundancy

where are the old gods  
     have their eyes cataract'd  
 but it is written the stones sibilant

and we know Orpheo made the trees to  
 rustle and skip a pace or two  
 but these are profound tales

& besides

they were Greek

& these rocks are a scurvy lot  
     the indolence inbred  
 for this job one needs  
 perhaps Christian diligence of yore  
     not to mention the upthrust  
 of Atlas

1965

## 4 POEMS OF MYSELF &amp; OTHERS

i

In every Circle there is  
                                   some romantic design:  
 An old man half-blind de-  
                                   claiming his fragments  
 of Sappho  
                                   to streets too assiduous  
 in their stupefaction to believe  
                                   Greek flung in the face of  
 public speech,  
                                   that's just plain old  
 American  
                                   defying scansion  
 Lacking malice,  
                                   there is no presumption  
 here. The emotions  
                                   have not been challenged  
 the pride  
                                   still intact  
 due to a language  
                                   barrier. A  
 demonstration of force has been  
                                   avoided. The hound  
 sensing nothing  
                                   above curb-stone level  
 trots merrily on  
                                   wagging a tail of  
 contentment.

ii

Search for a just  
                                   terminology but  
 the blood has  
                                   long ceased to flow  
 in the sentence.  
                                   Saint  
 and genius does not appear:  
                                   there are interruptions  
 between the Acts  
                                   and the long gaps of

silences. Tho

I lack the saint's vision, I have  
the Poet's damaged ear.

O World  
of the False Vision

O all you  
eastman kodax people  
--film under water scene.

Of the seven loaves  
to the multitude he  
subjectively said:

"let them be fed", something  
which they have not  
themselves created. 'Bon appetite'  
and their imaginations  
grew.

A child

I remember  
opening shell after shell of god  
who eats the things  
--clams, finding no pearls.

About now I had  
other failures: I heard  
the sirens singing  
from the spiral shell.

And I remember yes  
my first image burst  
into bloom.

Other moments there were too  
come back to me now

as I write: there's my  
first love in a dress of  
gold brocade and there  
the Rose

its double meaning of  
convoluted intent,  
set me all contra-basso  
vibrating about the one  
string the which was  
all my counterpoint.

Something of their meaning



has been lost. It is  
                   an age of Comedy.

## iii

Memory

                  mother of the Muses:  
 "I remember, I remember", that  
                   was my father  
 "and when you are older"  
                   holding on/to words  
 for fear of losing his mind,  
                   --meaning words  
 "you'll be  
                   sorry *one* day"  
 But I was on  
                   a roller coaster and  
 the rides on the house. The question mark  
                   was too far out for me  
 nor did those jewels  
                   arrayed along the shelves  
 keep me from my rage. I  
                   remember too, how my first  
 Poem brought me to  
                   my knees.

## iv

Today

                  most men come at bargain rates.  
                   It is  
 not their faults, but  
                   circumstances  
 making for a shift in  
                   emphasis. Men today are  
 sleek  
                   and rich in flesh-tones.  
 It is all reflection  
                   from shallow pools  
 and it is already late  
                   September. Approaching  
 the Dark Lady between the Twin Towers,

B & J, they stammer,  
long lapses of silence or  
they panic. They do not have  
the Magic Word or  
they have lost it.

## RECAPITULATION

## Memory

mother of the Muses.  
So it is that a thread  
from my childhood has  
come up to me. The Jeweld Cup,  
symbol of Life. Not to forget  
the bullet lodged in the skull  
's no solution. Tho  
it has been for many  
a way out.

1961

## Joke

they think  
that i don't kno that i kno  
that i don't kno  
that they know  
that i don't kno  
    (hitch *is* i DO!

## II

what you hear  
     on t.v. goes  
 in one ear  
     & out the door  
 "close the draft  
     i'm chilly"  
 "sorry dear"  
                     (in a lower  
                     register)

1968

## I

this Jesuit priest  
     at Boston College (that's a pill)  
 & says Ezra Pound  
                     "must be a Jew"  
 & went on teaching  
     Boston Irish economics  
 ( from a Jewish text book!)

1968

## V

we came to america  
     cause the boat  
 wuz flat when  
     mother round'd the  
 horn she hugg'd  
                     the bear

## VI

(a vue d'oeil)  
 there's the paris-review  
 publishing its trans-atlantic  
     dirty underwear  
     w/ occasional schoolboy's  
 sounding Eliot like  
     they wuz keepin' cool  
 w/ Cal  
     you muthers suck!

## SPRING W/ JUNK (COLLAGE 1968)

...ejaculates its hindmost  
     while God on speed turns  
         Nature on to dexies' yellow  
 daffadiles & bennies' mary jane  
     get layed in poppy juice while  
     birds above on poppers  
         let go their playbacks  
 of many springs and bed spreads'  
     singing wires of tel & tel cocain  
     in coils of green kay-y  
         to make the goin' easy fer  
 boys (too big fer girls) so genties all  
 make it on grass while youse is green  
 for autumn's pale main line awaits  
     all summer kicks  
 as Saturn lows the boom

1968

## III

this racial imbalance  
     walking towards me  
 w/ eyes for white hostility  
 stopped on a dime  
     for momentarily saw  
 his wife's face in  
     a caucasian store dummy  
 2 piece low cut  
     something 'o r'other  
 that don't care a that fer  
     the color of your money

1968

## NUBIS IN NUBIBUS

this very "english"  
     gentleman, Oliver  
 Wendell Dowland the III'd  
 (colored) maintains a nine  
     room cold water walk-up  
 buckingham palazzo in the  
     black borough of  
 Roxbury the which the he-she  
 thinks (demented queen that  
 she is) out in Chestnut Hills!

1968

## IV

this enitre  
     horror shew  
 so called "free world"  
     is a paid  
 political announcement  
     brought to you by  
 the international con-  
     spiracy of pronouns  
 we dare not utter here  
     for fear of re-  
 prisals

1968

## LII

Trees horny w/ leaves  
     scratching their crotches  
 full ov bird tweet  
     as the hard-on hills  
 get a blow job from the east  
 all to censor'd bird songs  
     & the flower orgy  
 when this wino  
     comes out of his stupor  
 it will be too late for  
     spring

OU YANG HSIU  
 (1007-1072) Sung Dynasty

1968

LI

## BRISK WALK TO PAVILION OF GOOD CROPS &amp; PEACE

Trees all got up & deck'd out  
     w/ flowers in their hair  
                     hillocks  
 like crisp new money;  
                     sun about to split  
 a scene laying out  
     the green carpet to an  
 infinity of unconcern'd that cld  
     care less  
                     as these  
 here today gone tomorrows'  
     tramp up & down fronting  
 the pavilion  
 & the flowers  
                     underfoot

OU YANG HSIU  
 (1007-1072) Sung Dynasty

1968

## XII

## ON THE ESPLANADE

as snow flying past  
                   on the picture tube  
 & petals of ten thousand springs  
                   carried by the wind  
 blowing no good  
                   then the fade-out  
                   & I turn to drink.  
 Pair of kingfishers shack up in  
                   the pavilion with rotten teeth  
 stoned bi-sexual unicorns  
                   case the park &  
 the thud-like empty tomb  
                   (to each his own  
                   after his kind or a folded  
   quilt)  
 to think I let an underpaid  
                   pencil pushing bureaucratic  
   appointment deter me  
 from a here she goes fire one  
                   (just ripe for making)  
  
   plum blossoms

TU FU (713-770)



## KINESTHESIS

People in life are not  
 like they are in the movies  
 In the movies they are  
     dead animates  
     (they move  
                     volition  
 holds them to sway  
 In life (if they ever do  
                     meet  
 an animated cartoon  
 they would flip so  
 imitative are we.

1968

## A REVEL

*(for John Fusco)*

delirious as tho  
 of barbitos  
     i had drunk  
 & a strange passion  
                     swelling blood into my heart  
 from my mind  
     runs the Poem  
 upon dithyrambic feet  
                     lustily  
 i cry out in a Poem to you  
                     my sweet will be twenty  
                     on sunday next  
 upon such feet  
     of shaggy measure  
 i come  
     privily

permitting it pleases you  
 a scene by Fragonard  
 prostrate to whisper to you  
 beneath a hedge  
 as above & about hover  
 nymphs, niads & other demi-beasts of sorts  
 even to the hushd wings of pretty doves  
 fluttering & cherubs  
 caroling my amours repeat  
  
*my sweet will be twenty  
 on sunday next*  
 now in middle March  
 when the wind is intemperate still  
 i muster what devices  
 the imagination prompts me to  
 ( a painter, these conceits are  
 not unfamiliar to you)  
 so i need not  
 make apologies for  
 a decor classic & eclectic  
 which, in my frenzy i arranged  
 hoping therewith  
 to ensnare your fancy, sweet  
 it is a Poet's madness driving him  
 willy nilly  
 howbeit to his own destruction  
 maskd or metamorphosed into  
 some wondrous animal guise  
 centaur, unicorn or faun  
 repeat

*my sweet will be twenty  
on sunday next*

so even to the birds  
                                  whose calls  
the ancients invoked  
                                  & unabashedly coo'd  
                                  their canzones  
  to wit-a-woo  
all of it i bring  
                                  again, my sweet, to you  
in the spring-time of the Poem  
where else  
                                  when spray begins to springeth  
could i come in my folly  
                                  bearing you  
in some small measure  
such snatches  
                                  purloind as i have  
of that antique liturgy  
  repeat  
  *my sweet will be twenty  
  on sunday next*

the phrase as reprieve  
reverberates within my skull  
as i say in my high passion  
                  may he not also  
                                  love me too

repeat

*my sweet will be twenty  
on sunday next*

& i have come to sing to you

ELUSIVE 'ARILLO

*(after a Poem by Salvatore Di Giacomo)*

tho' more deeply read than

i, cannot hear  
his 'arillo's

out of office

" 'scri' "

" 'scri' "

(bugger's

soundin' you

and still he pursues. hey, (sotta voce)  
false muse

have a care

that T'jass you dish up to us  
sumthin' else

& who knows

if we ever do get to the moon

there you'll have it made

hold fast!

" 'scri' "

" 'scri' "

p.s. he may be a frog:

"écouté"

"écouté"

1967

## DANCE METRIC

My thoughts march orderly across the page  
the mind

hems & haws defining  
a dance of ideas

but not, and I  
caution: only the mind violates the law  
taking exceptions to

create  
(never new laws

but a flexibility  
as the tender vine shoots emerge  
from an old vine stock

creeping up the wall  
tentacles perceiving out  
new ways,

to design  
an arrangement of parts  
the particulars  
of the Poem

can be traced  
for the mind etches  
(technique long since  
buried

underneath  
but the pattern is obvious  
as are  
markings on birds.

...and we cannot ignore the possibilities of  
form,

but then what is form  
unless the whole design  
be set before you

filed and pruned  
the underbrush cleared  
that the spaces  
show thru  
clear!

## THE NEW ART

...and on Beacon Hill  
     the young stallions  
         fresh from the learnery stable  
             surrounding us

frisk themselves  
                     & kick-up their heels  
 talk's about

    the new *risorgimento*  
                     but they soon cool  
 corraled two's & by two's

thus is the system  
 thus is the system

                    maintain'd  
                     maintain'd  
 "nothin' but death & taxes"  
 nothin' but death & taxes

                    ad whoosie  
                     frothings in his beard  
 'cause probably they do not have  
                     their which-a-thing  
 properly screwed into  
     their what-ch'a-ma-call-its  
 the all of which  
     leads ring-in-nose  
 back to the present debacle

                    of intellectual climate  
 ...farty old stallions

                    puffin & stewin  
     their X-factors  
 re the nature &

characteristics of these

invisible bodies

known to be there

woof & warp of it as it were

of the Greater Cosmos

Come letz confound them

with our metaphysical

gymnastics--

send up false lights

lure them onto the rocks

as used to the Alchemystical Saints of yore--

those keepers of the flames

they'll roundly applaud us

what say you?

letz about it

1965

## POEM

...her nouns  
     flung over  
 her shoulder  
     as carry-all  
     to a pair of  
 verbal endings  
     sheath'd in  
     celanese  
 & all to the undoings of  
     hipster play boys  
 here & yonder

1965

## LA CHASSE

upon the true ground  
     he consecrated her  
 laid --amidst acorns & settings  
     of that season  
                     climax'd,  
 all to a squabble of birds by,  
     till snapping her rosary  
                     beads that flew  
                     to the  
 universal dissolvent  
     which unites w/some  
 things easier than  
                     w/others  
 the while  
     subjective flames  
                     of pentecostal fire  
 lick'd  
     his unchromed  
                     exposed bumper.

1965



## NOW SCENE

...this jazz passing for Art  
           a rag pull'd  
 between two dogs. rest is  
           his raised third leg   relieved  
 trots on smelling others  
 a good hump come upon  
                   accident    then  
 go their separate ways  
   sans remorse just  
           dogs the otherwise:  
 bulls, that violent and for red  
   read "mostly alcohol".

A great seething mass of inhumanity  
   breeding violence and  
 bringing up the worst of  
 bestiaries    which  
           they neither know nor recognize  
 tho' with some knowledge of parental  
           failure , they just fall away  
 shaking their heads in fractured english  
 puzzled they fall back into their various  
   dialecti contrite they die

the undertaker, he gets the joke  
 and how they do make 'em pay  
           you either hate  
 or you die.

## CANTICLE

This is the time of year when  
they bring the great golden  
apples into market. I love you

but you cannot love me.  
I am misery. I am hate. But you  
are at that like

The great golden apples they  
bring into market  
at this time of year. I

have no desire to taste them  
but to feast my eyes, ah  
there's the rub. Rubric

gone haywire. Worm has  
enter'd the reverse side  
of The Moon. Coil'd

at the core about the seed  
waiting. Well, I have no  
desire to taste them

The great golden apples  
they bring into market  
at this time of the year.

1964

## FOR LEROI JONES

maybe that "quest thing"  
 could be "tightened" maybe  
 my things "have changed too"  
 maybe            lot-of-things  
 Like now you take out back here:  
 2 girls bounce ball  
 against a brickwall avoiding  
 the scrawl'd to right of  
                  white perpendicular  
                  "F"  
                  O  
                  U  
                  L"-line.

1960

## ROOTS -- FOR TOM BALAS

for conjugal embrace  
 I go down to the seashore  
 to horn husbands that had  
                  horns before  
 vowel purpose's to soften cacophony  
          sharp horizontal schizoid verticals  
 not    gate-mouth to run            steaming  
          tail stuck in one ear  
 whereas the hype    O (same specie)  
                                  kills mee  
 "he's got rhythm,yeaahh,when he stomps his feet,  
 he sends me right off to sleep"

1960

## EPITAPH I

...hurld from the back-woods  
     of dubious strains  
         given to craze  
 --his works on his hip und so  
     on out to the "coast"  
 to confuse Her voice  
     w/a combo of jazz  
 ergo scriptum he went,  
     (via a lost town  
         in Mexico w/no doctor)  
                     to his just  
 or other rewards.

1965

## MNEMONIC

...for all its tawdry  
                     cheapness;  
 the religious scapulas ,  
         printed sentiments  
 of gone novenas  
         the too too preciosos  
 of saviours w/thorns  
                 Joe Dunn  
         used to bring in to me  
 from Charlestown;  
 he knew,  
     tho' never spoke,  
                     preferring Bob  
 Creeley's things  
         he was an  
                     oasis among  
 this desert  
         of irish sand

1965



disentangles Himself  
 from a syntactical  
     subordination to the Word,  
 no longer made flesh.

    (abt here i am fully aware  
         that this is not the world of awakesness)  
 The old woman now touches  
     it, equally free  
         the new present which  
 continues unchallenged  
 until, with verse  
     (The Law) once again  
 to break the scene off.  
 All content is arranged with  
 that end in view.  
 "I" is the recollection  
 which awakes in future  
     dream tenses.

So that the possibility of  
     connections before and after  
 no longer exist(s). It is  
 an old story made  
     the exclusive present.  
 So it was  
 after these things  
 he said:

    "Behold, here I am".  
 Seaweed & seascum  
     bedringgled (bedraggled) the  
         wholly transformd.  
 It is the voice of the line  
 coming from that dark place  
 to foreshadow in  
     a foreground  
 our eyes are not yet  
     accustomed to;  
 these sentences about whose  
 syntactical connections  
     we are told nothing.  
 It is the mysterious(ly) wary.

Therein lies it's motivation.  
 The entire process  
     in vacue  
 no place is meant to indicate  
     clearly.

The time is always  
     late in the evening  
 it's "the early morning"  
 that is the wordless spectre  
     we wrestle a skin-diver  
 in a room full of blood.  
 The place we shall  
 come to know  
 is clearly stated  
     in certain musical  
     statements of  
     horns upendings.

(I take it that Jack Spicer's "phonemes" carry  
     the printed circuitry that upon utterance  
     reproduces the visual impression)

The place of the Act is  
 exactly stated.  
 It is a scene characterized  
     apart from person  
     or story.  
 neither pleasant or unpleasant  
 is all we are told  
     & is seldom if ever  
 illuminated in old script.  
 Crabbd ambiguity of  
     lost connections.  
 The contrary indicates the  
     absolute existence.  
 Suspense is the present  
     bordering on the future.

The Poet robs us of  
     our emotions;  
 we are left fishbones  
     wrangling by seaboard.  
 This is the "two" used of  
     direct discourse.

Thought indication bares  
    it's motives.  
We are still but not free  
    of guilt.  
When the fever passes  
    we contrive to give up  
    the host.  
God is an interruption of  
    heavy silence.  
The two "went together".  
Everything, you see, remains  
    unstressed.  
The "two" equally ancient  
    in the foreground.  
The brush-strokes pock-marks,  
    the lacuna of Rodin.  
What lies between light  
    spaces undefined?  
This detail of canvas is  
    undisclosed silence  
        going back & forth  
        leaves an impression  
So instantly we reawaken  
This is the first day of our lives!

1964-67



## THREE DANCE MOODS FOR EAR

i

The smile that curved so  
                   once about the lips  
                   lifted at the corners  
 and yawnd into the spaces left for words  
                   that never come  
                   or hides, like the subtle ivy,  
 its tentacles beneath a green shade,  
                   looking out,  
                   solicits no applause.

ii

...nor, in this common light, have we  
                   fared better, most  
                   unhappy lot  
 made no-  
                   toriously reasonable;  
                   chance and circumstance/turns all to  
 cold metallic purpose  
                   setting no sights to move or to dance  
                   the image. Dismantled  
                   all that machinery  
                   departed. leaving the scene/to  
                   maudlin abstractions,  
                   passions too powerful to be  
                                   believed  
 or if believed,  
                   too long endured.

iii

In the age of frescoes he  
                   married the classic image  
 adding to/it his own  
                   outraged agonies

depending from the lower limb  
                                     of some Paduan master,  
 the vulture surveys almost the entire can-  
                                     vas. So one thinks of  
                                     Chagall's husband floating past,  
 caught-  
                                     up in a swirl  
                                     of past regrets. It is  
 an audacious willingness to experience.

1961

## BLACK ORPHEUS

boy  
                     wants to X-press  
 himself

                    to bang  
 his meat w/a box

strung  
                     w/2 or 3

loosely strung  
                     cat guts

1965

## WHAT MADE MAUD HUM

...is what I keep asking myself

that night mr. Roosevelt got reelected as far back as I can remember mr. Roosevelt was getting himself reelected mother and aunt Loretta who signed her letters Anna Loretta Rios-Olive because she said the Rios-Olive is as important to America as the Perkins and Parkers she meant miss Rosa Parker whose mother was a Perkins and miss Parker had books with marked pages to show what the Perkins and Parkers did to help mr. Washington free us from the English kings as later the Parkers gave all their money to help Maud's folks get free from the Southerners but aunt Loretta said this was not so and they aunt Loretta and Miss Parker with all of her books and the marked pages would say things about the English kings and the southerners until mother's head would suggest itself and they would apologize and Miss Parker would leave and aunt Loretta would read Mrs Eddy for mother so her head wouldnt suggest itself anymore and uncle Ed would come home as he did this night and tell us mr. Roosevelt is mr. it for another four years mother and aunt Loretta didnt like mr. Roosevelt but Maud did and when I went to Maud's room which was before hers mine she was humming and the radio was talking about how mr. Roosevelt did it mother and aunt Loretta liked mr. Roosevelt's cousins whose uncle was elected before this mr. Roosevelt now always getting himself reelected but aunt Leona from St. Augustine who later came to live with us didnt like the other mr. Roosevelt before this mr. Roosevelt now always getting himself reelected since I can remember for what he did in San Juan to the fine families like her husband's and all the trash came in and they had to live in St. Augustine with grandfather and granny Lizzy who was so old nobody knew how old she was and used to talk with all our dead relatives for us because she was the only one

that could see them well not really see them because she was blind and she said I had blond hair and fair skin which I didnt but I was told not to say I didnt so I didnt and uncle Ed said she was soft as a grape but uncle Ed was father's brother and aunt Loretta said they were mixed up with the worse protestant element in New Bedford so the men had salt on the brain aunt Loretta was right because uncle Ed thought a lot about the sea and always said he was a fisherman when people asked him what he did but there was no water in Plainfield and they could not understand uncle Ed saying he was a fisherman all the time and uncle Ed would change the subject and talk about something else and nobody would say anything because we all knew a lot of things that we didnt talk about and everybody knew that should know so nobody would say anything when uncle Ed started being a fisherman all over again like the summer he took me out to Nantucket to mr. Enos who went to school with father in New Bedford and they drank beer and talked about the old days and the mess mr. Roosevelt was making and they asked me how I liked Nantucket and I said I didnt and they said that my grandfather would turn over in his grave and I guess they were right cause father said grandfather was hit over the head and drowned near somebody's light-house off Gloucester so later uncle Ed gave me a copy of Moby Dick and then I knew why uncle Ed was always a fisherman and didnt go to the Health Society with mother and aunt Loretta and said the Monitor had no guts and aunt Loretta would read because she said uncle Ed was highly suggestive like Maud who got flu and mrs. Glickman's doctor came to our house to make her better and talked mother into examining her and told uncle Ed mother had tumor aunt Loretta was in New York raising money for the real Indians who lost their rice crop and when she got back she told Maud that mrs. Glickman's doctor should not have come to our house and the practitioner came over from Greenwich and then mother got happy again and then people started suggesting death to us first aunt Leona in New Bedford where she was

cremated and then great uncle Fred but great uncle Fred was Catholic like some of father's people and they cant get themselves cremated like father who was not a practicing Catholic then mr. Roosevelt no first mr. Roosevelt got himself reelected and then he died and they played good music on the radio and when the train passed thru 30th St. station I cried with George Dayhof who cried driving back to York from Philadelphia and all the good music was playing on his car radio but we couldnt hear it at his house in York as his people are Quakers and dont like radios but they liked me and I went to their church which they call a meeting house and nobody said anything except one man who got up after a while and talked from the audience and nobody was surprised as they are not at aunt Loretta's Health Society when she got up one Wednesday evening and told everybody how Science saved our house from mortgage and we didnt ever have to go to mr. Roosevelt's house loanman in the First National Bank Building because aunt Loretta didnt think well of mr. Roosevelt who died after father suggested death to us and didnt because the Practitioner came from Greenwich and everything was as it should have been and the Practitioner left us to our goodness but Maud was humming as she hummed the whole time the Practitioner was with us to get things back where they should be after so many people suggested death to us and didnt and uncle Ed didnt accept father's suggestion because he talked with mr. Degrutta the Practitioner and he later went with aunt Loretta to the Health Society that was then the First Church of Christ, Scientist because they had enuf members to become aunt Loretta told Maud not to be telling people like mr. Carney that father died and we cremated him at night in Westchester as she did and she was not to discuss our home life with mrs. Glickman who was an outsider but Maud was sorry as she said she was but aunt Loretta said she was colored and colored people had colored love so they had a good deal to overcome but that's not what

uncle Ed said uncle Ed said Maud had bad nigger blood and wasnt like Mrs. Homan who went to the Health Society and her husband was a dentist in the colored section of the Army but when Captain Homan came home from the Army he wasnt colored at all he had blue eyes and fair skin like aunt Lizzy said I had and I didnt because I went back in father's people and everybody talked a good deal about the Homans but after a while they stopped and started talking about the Germans and then miss Olga came to us and everybody started talking about miss Olga and said she was German but miss Olga was not German miss Olga was Swiss and the Swiss dont like the Germans very much because miss Olga told us how they used to dump bread over the boarder when the Germans insulted them because they wouldnt exchange their old marks aunt Loretta liked miss Olga's coming to us because she could talk French and German and aunt Loretta liked talking in French and German because aunt Loretta was a governess where they talk French and German so they talked German better but I didnt understand German because aunt Lizzy said German was the pig's language but uncle Ed said aunt Lizzy was soft as a grape so that was that Maud said mrs. Glickman was German too but miss Olga spoke with mrs. Glickman and said she was a Pole and her people Jews but I didnt understand that and she didnt look like a Pole to me but Maud liked mrs. Glickman and was always saying how much more money she made when she worked for mrs. Glickman but aunt Loretta said mrs. Glickman liked Maud but she wouldnt have her working for her because she talked too much and couldnt afford to have Maud around talking so much but mrs. Glickman was a great talker I dont know why aunt Loretta said Maud talked too much Maud didnt talk too much Maud hummed Maud was always humming when everybody else was talking too much but mrs. Glickman didnt hum mrs. Glickman talked everytime I'd see mrs. Glickman on the street she was talking so much Maud came to us from mrs. Glickman and mother and aunt Loretta was not sure Maud was right for us coming from mrs. Glickman and miss. Kirkland from the Health Society told mother and aunt Loretta

that Maud would bring bad vibrations in our house and it was bad enuf having uncle Ed's vibrations that werent bad but werent as vibrations should be and everybody was trying to fix uncle Ed's vibrations but uncle Ed didnt care a hoot about damn fool women and their ole vibrations and he told mr. Schofield at the post office he didnt mother said Maud wasnt anything before she came to Plainfield not even a Baptist but aunt Loretta said this could be good but miss. Kirkland wasnt so sure and so Maud came to us from mrs. Glickman who wasnt a Quaker before she was a Christian Scientist mrs. Glickman wasnt ever any of these things for uncle Ed said she wasnt anything like Maud and that was very well because Maud wasnt anything but miss Olga said mrs. Glickman was a Pole and she miss. Olga talks a little but I didnt understand mrs. Glickman being a Pole because mrs. Glickman never looked like a Pole to me but uncle Ed said mr. Glickman was a Jew in Florida but mrs. Glickman didnt burn candles every weekend so she wasnt a Jew but mr. Schofield said mrs. Glickman was atheist and mr. Schofield knew what everybody was in Plainfield because he saw all the books they bought and he said mrs. Glickman was atheist and that why she liked mr. Roosevelt getting himself reelected all the time since I can remember and that was alright because Maud liked mr. Roosevelt always getting himself reelected since I can remember and when everybody was saying how wrong mr. Roosevelt was getting himself reelected Maud was humming as Maud always hummed but mrs. Glickman didnt hum and mrs. Glickman didnt burn candles mrs. Glickman burned gas when gas rationing was and uncle Ed said she did because uncle Ed was on the Plainfield rationing board and he knew how much everybody was getting and he knew mrs. Glickman was burning more gas than she should have mother said it wasnt good Christian to burn more gas when the boys needed it so badly but mrs. Glickman didnt care because she wasnt a Christian and Maud said mrs. Glickman didnt think too hot for us Christians and Maud said mrs. Glickman said a lot



of other things about us Christians and Maud said we werent as bad as mrs. Glickman made out we were Maud said we were real nice folks but crazy as bed-bugs because we didnt go to doctors and wouldnt say people died when they did die but aunt Loretta said Maud was good and didnt know it so we had to think very much for her vibrations which werent like ours and aunt Loretta was right they werent like ours hers were colored but she would be pure white one day because God was good but we didnt do much thinking for mrs. Glickman because aunt Loretta said she was a noisy kike and they wanted the world and mother said yes why go after the crumbs when one could eat from the Master's table and nobody said anything but I heard Maud humming in the pantry and I dont know if she understands when mother speaks about the Master's table but Maud told me the Master was a Jew and mrs. Glickman told her her folks had kicked him out of the Jew Church because he talked too much and I didnt understand this and I asked uncle Ed and uncle Ed got red and went up to mother and mother called down to aunt Loretta and aunt Loretta sent me to Miss Parker's for company and that was the night Miss Parker told me all about how her folks in Charlestown helped mr. Washington free us from the English kings and dressing up like real American Indians and dumping their old tea in mr. Hancock's wharf and I was very glad because uncle Ed said they sent us the tea so we could pay more taxes and the more taxes you have to pay the less freedom there is so that's why mr. Roosevelt kept getting himself re-elected all the time since I can remember so he can keep raising the taxes and sending them to the English kings that Miss Parker's folks had already freed us from but Maud liked mr. Roosevelt always getting himself reelected and when I told Maud what uncle Ed said she laughed and started humming and why did she do that I didnt understand Maud humming like that and not saying anything uncle Ed said Maud didnt understand either and aunt Loretta said Maud hummed because all colored folks hummed to fill up their head since there wasnt much else in their



heads so thats why they gave us all the wonderful spirituals that aunt Leona could play in St. Augustine on the gold piano that great uncle Vaz brought from San Juan with his wife and children when the other mr. Roosevelt before this mr. Roosevelt now always getting himself reelected since I can remember let all the trash come in and ruin everything so the fine families had to come to Charleston and New Orleans where cousin Edmund comes to us from once removed aunt Loretta said cousin Edmund was once removed because he was great uncle Vaz's people and great uncle Vaz's people had renegade blood and was always causing revolutions and I guess she was right because cousin Edmund caused everybody in Plainfield to talk and miss Kirkland said cousin Edmund had a cavalier dash and I didnt understand anything about cavaliers but I liked cousin Edmund because I wanted to be tall like he was and have sideburns and black hair but mother said I couldnt ever because I had brown hair and we werent suppose to be very tall so that was that but I still wanted to but I didnt say anymore about it but cousin Edmund promised to send me boots and ten gallon hat like he always wore in New Orleans but he didnt never because he aunt Loretta said couldnt go over to New Orleans because he had trouble with mr. Long so cousin Edmund had to go to Cuba where uncle Ed said his wop friends were hiding out from mr. Long and I didnt understand anything about all these things but I didnt understand a lot of things about cousin Edmund being at our house as aunt Loretta said people in Plainfield wouldnt understand because of Maud but I didnt understand that either because cousin Edmund liked Maud and said she belonged in New Orleans and Maud giggled which wasnt like Maud who always hummed and Maud didnt hum when cousin Edmund came to us once removed since cousin Edmund's coming Maud giggled so aunt Loretta and mother talked with uncle Ed and then aunt Loretta read while uncle Ed talked to cousin Edmund in the back parlor where nobody could hear them and I was reading what I dont remember what I was reading and mother was trying a

new pattern she got from miss Olga and aunt Loretta was as I said she was reading and uncle Ed was in the back Parlor standing in father's shoes as mother said he was suppose to well not really father's shoes because mother gave father's things to the Salvation people who dont kill like the army that father and uncle Ed was and went off to help the fine families make mr. Zapata behave so father gave uncle Ed his gold watch to look out for the women and me so when uncle Ed keeps taking out his watch and looking at the gold chain we knew uncle Ed was turning over something that would be as father would have it so nobody said anything this night until uncle Ed raised his voice in the back parlor and opened the french doors and then he and cousin Edmund had a glass of Sherry which father kept and called Jerry because its Spanish and then uncle Ed would clear his throat and address mother and aunt Loretta as ladies and say as he did this nite that cousin Edmund has to leave us very suddenly this very night and mother and aunt Loretta would make a fuss and say he must come again and cousin Edmund said he would but we knew he wouldnt as he was going to Cuba where there was sure to be trouble as there was and mr. Ricardo's father lost out and mr. Ricardo has to teach ladies Spanish and French at the Berlitz System in New York so he couldnt finish his book on voodoo that he was always writing but aunt Loretta was certain it all worked out for the best as she felt it was all mesmerism and we should see it for what it is but I didnt understand very well about mesmerism and mother said it was just as well as aunt Loretta had seen it all through along with mrs. Eddy for us so we wouldnt have to bother read mr. Ricardo's book that was never finished anyway but uncle Ed wasnt so sure since he was down in Mexico where the Indians go along with all this mesmerism that aunt Loretta could see through with mrs. Eddy and they were Christians at the same time

BOSTON, WHERE EVEN THE "JIG" IS IRISH

...& irish

                    is near to godliness;  
 the jew a mortal sin  
                     along with the "jig"  
 his near step-brother  
                     & all of'em  
                     whirled out, at top speeds  
 from the central hub  
                                 onto interplanetary  
                     suburbanian  
                                 out-of-space  
 its as if  
                     the grass (and it dont  
                                 grow under our feet;  
 In their wake,  
                     vacant lots  
                                 interspersed of  
                     broken pint-sized (empty)  
                                 winos  
 who sing a drunken da da's  
                                 requiem  
                     of the city's decease.

What needs i lie

                    when its all  
                                 all of it in print  
 that's swept, by the wind (letz say)  
                     from the gutter into  
                                 high office.  
 From such filth ('cause the tune  
                                 falls that way)  
                     do we stand fully re-  
                                 veald  
                                 in Rome  
                                 Tokyo, Berlin  
                                 Moscow  
                                 or Paris  
 this all of which is to be read  
                                 as sd

mostly abroad  
 gutterd : de-seeingst the market's  
 tergents de-  
 odorants  
 wont help you non  
 they kno we all stink

*Corruptio* at the very  
 inception ( Hamilton's  
 inlaws I suppose he did-it for  
 -- Revolutionary's to be redeemd-when-the  
 -young-republic-got funds to etc. not to mention  
 the agreement --Pinckney's --So Carolina's  
 --as ref. status of slaves  
 i could go on)  
 et

*Putrefactio* a le nadir  
 er shd i say it in Grk.(Attic, if you prefer)  
 in which tongue you wld stand  
 more fully reveald

*in der nacht*  
 you  
 who must feel the real presence  
 feelings like stalactites  
 or bats strung up-side-down  
 yr hopes on display in the shopper's world  
 of artificial lights  
 --no, no change  
 a mere more pronounced Revelation  
 --a shudder  
 & a chill

*in der nacht*

I have seen much  
 of the World  
 come & go  
 hope to see a lot more

I have yr number  
     yr card  
             index'd filed  
                     escape me never  
     I who hear thru doors  
         & see thru eons  
 Be my guest  
     *Mephisto*

*in der nacht*

1965

ASK YR UNDERTAKER FOR CREDIT

Paterson's a  
     rather longish Poem  
 in five books      written by  
     William Carlos  
             Williams(now w/god)  
 who in 1694 (circa)  
             founded The Bank  
 of England  
     tho' if I wrote &  
     published it      the  
 american people wld say  
             I died in-(ahum)  
                     solvent

1965

## THE PROCESS

so it is with the return  
     of another spring

La primavera & Botticeliana

spray. as a shower of gold

after the dead season

Thinking to have lost  
     my voice                   til  
         bud by bud  
 the Poem           unfolds  
 itself

then the flower  
     at the topmost  
         that will be the title

each fruit makes  
     of its own savour

no two Poems are alike

## THE STREET

it's a nice street  
I live on a very nice street  
w/nice little ole ladies  
who remark on yr  
window boxes  
& go on to say what a nice day  
it is for death  
they have dividends  
& memories of horse cars  
on Tremont St.;

Cora Fletcher who de-  
scended from the Revolution  
rest assured  
Heaven is of the reformed  
persuasion  
with English place-names  
skirting the periphery

1966

FOR JOHN WIENERS 1/6/60

who will come after you  
     singing as well/  
         here the music breaks      as you  
             (later we must take that  
                 again make it reprieve)  
                                     sound  
 like a black iris by Kline  
             a broken telephone  
 (old kind with horizontals  
         and forkd receiver  
                                     for hooks  
 to receive the (click) poem  
                 it rings but it is  
                 not for the(e)  
 (head full of old tunes  
         w/a bad connection)  
                                     fix? why  
                                     hell noe  
 suffer there for me to  
                                     suffer.  
                                     whats?  
 if this music hits you hit  
                                     back  
 we go straight too  
                                     but hell  
         that is too  
 w/me it is the same old wrong number  
                                     up.....

man sd. (Groliers') we got  
*audience* one old *measure*  
 some last yrs' ferlinghetti  
 & a corman revue achilles fang  
 rummaging thru ' I heard from  
 corman & remembered ch'you then  
 the old cat connectd & laid it



on me man I flippd the upshot wuz  
 yr ole lady on the phone  
 blaming dana

when,man,it's the beads O  
 stop up the drain

and the access to remorse  
 too

there is no loss of

whiteness in yr hostelerie

be it wentley or irvington

rooms they all have

spaces between

the fuckin' wall paper rhymes

1960

## A PROPOSITION

*(for Ed Marshall)*

the true church

depends upon the ether

there are gods in the

solemn air

it is an triangular

affair

the altar: two stones

support a third

a lintel beam

there is no roof

for here the sun

is worshipped

and by night the moon

with rememberd light

comforts the howl

of worshippers and

other crawling lusts

Nor have we fared better

in this common light that

made notoriously  
reasonable

this most unhappy lot  
chance and

circumstance turns

all to stone and

metallic purpose

sets no sights to move

or images to dance

in streets that

machinery dismantled

departing have

left the scene

to abstractions

of passions too

powerful to be

believed

or if believed

too long endured

what is partaken

is broken into fragments

without connection

between the acts

things fall apart

"ananke prevails"

the center does not hold

there is no return

what has been

surrenderd

cannot be(re)claimed

the magic word

has been lost

or if recalled

the parched

tongue will not

articulate

terror issues from

the deep

this is the first

day and nothing is

to be done

for at the time

I had not form

the wolf-dog

bayd at the foot

of the tower

lacking the living voice

1961

Fielding Dawson:

## NUCLEAR NOVEMBER

I was heading north toward the skyscrapers on the other side of Union Square, when I angled in between parked cars; after work; my mind was worn, and I looked forward to buying the paper and getting a drink, and as I walked between the cars a motion caught me -

glancing down, I saw a young man lying on the front seat of the closed car, licking the picture, his hand fumbling with the zipper of his pants.

His whole body was rigid, and trembling, as he licked the picture.

But his face was torn in pain, and lust, and it was like the sudden, crystallized in action wish come true, that he would die for licking the long dangling penis of the naked boy in the full page porno newspaper photo, licking that he would die for and trembling, regardless the boy, and his tabloid homosexuality, it was in power taste and touch of penis.

Regardless the guilt, as posthumously in life: hidden from all except I, secret sharer, as I went my way, bought my paper, and met my friends and my wife in the cheerful after-work throng at the bar.

Clayton Eshleman:

### THE BAPTISM OF DESIRE

Starting in again, a glass of cold water I  
 toss at you beautiful hiding & laughing on my  
 part of the bed, you jumped into my bath I  
 sat on the toilet shaking with laughter while  
 you bathed & when my turn came  
 the damn water was luke, as I shivered  
 in it only up to my crack you posed  
 & giggled -- & so I chase you thru this poem, to  
 spurt cold at you again, dancing woman on  
 my part of the bed, figure involved with  
 curtains I now would hang for you to giggle &  
 twist over your naked stomach & breasts,  
 but we don't have curtains, the sunlight pours  
 daily in, open to green oleander & Japanese  
 gardner's abashment, how strange to love &  
 sleep before open window, embrace you & watch  
 bush twigs or the sweet stones half submerged  
 in mud, this house the regeneration of Japanese  
 house from which nature was outside, each  
 flame of butterbur pain, obsessed with nature  
 since there my nature was withheld, a glass  
 of cold to toss liquid flame in the energy that is  
 joy, hear the blue-headed birds hit pane they see  
 only a world opening, blue-feather smear over  
 king-sized bed our one possession here, light  
 that is tossed back and forth, tepid water I

gladly sit in adore you Queen Shebaing with  
 towel what a lovely embrace the light water body  
 on the one road with heart, what a simple  
 throne bed is to lie sleep and peek at you,  
 O lovely rhythm that doesn't need myth other  
 than blue bird feather smear a pain coronation  
 head of the bed that my head can spill Protean  
 spermacetti without wincing since you are terminal  
 & again my train arrives

proem that drifts down to  
 the boy in tub she who is dead now bathed & can I  
 keep the glass of cold water tossing to you who  
 flirt in the folds of memory, figure of lovely Caryl  
 you are strong enough to let this dash of water be  
 potato and weenie, the knotty-pine dining room with  
 porthole window where the boy filled with protein did  
 not know an Austrian doctor had made a last judgement  
 to affirm love life of 12 year old, & as the cold water  
 tosses it is wind at the end of Boulevard Place over  
 untying of papers to trundle on my route

this present beauty  
 I know of you not unlike my vision of her, vision I tossed  
 in, again, in Japan standing on the island mid Higashiyama-  
 doori and watched the white linen toss on second story  
 roofs, there an innocent beholding of my mother the  
 photo of her at marriage lovely the photo of my father  
 at marriage lovely, I copulated them in the pain of  
 rooted to island waiting for streetcar to carry me  
 downtown Kyoto, 1963, seven years, but 28 years to  
 suddenly not in grass but in living memory sense  
 them, and the boy rushes in mind to put them in love  
 the white flapping towels and linen, all comingling of  
 leaves & clothes the desperate first, & I rushed cold  
 water into that possible image, no body to be hit but  
 road & rode downtown, & that was the pain to have no



terminal for first sprinklings of joy

& so she bathed the

crack of the boy demanded I not shower not linger in  
 bed at morning, those covers are still warm in the bed  
 over which life does seem to toss, a glass of cold  
 can be Arctic or can be joy & I love my first imaginings  
 of my mother tho no net caught the fish my mind/body  
 is, to throw and to throw in the throe that is the poem  
 your body Caryl the water dribbles down, runs to  
 foot of the bed that runs on its rails of world from  
 boy to man, there is a bed, one, we always inhabit  
 we are born in are nursed in fuck are lonely in &  
 sleep, this bed primally the door we open and close,  
 & you Caryl swirling flesh campanile sweet leaf  
 risen from the bloody waves,

this is no myth, it is

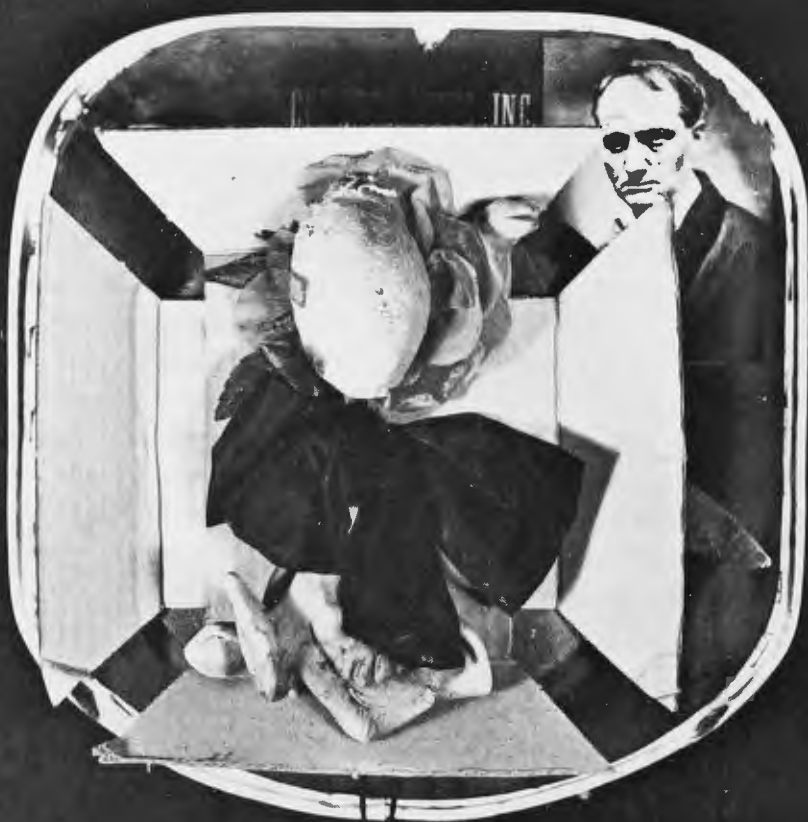
my life & the dogs that tear at the beautiful flesh in  
 Botticelli while the drinkers rear from their picnic  
 tables in alarm are water-sparkle from your body  
 you walk on the water I throw & I live on the water you  
 breathe & my mother in sunlight a halo of energy I  
 will have here around you, I see Gladys Spencer  
 thru the halls of the golden string of imagination, I  
 see the thirty-five stages of my years in her life, she  
 is the curtains, the opake folds we won't have in our  
 life, she is the backdrop my imagination loves to  
 see you dance against, playing at the organ & playing  
 pedaling the organ, pressing my feet down into deep  
 wood of boyhood piano scales upon scales dragon of  
 green Victory Stamps my little ass on needlework  
 cover of piano-bench Teaching Little Fingers To  
 throw the glass, press down Play and learn to walk  
 index over third finger the endless bass somber thru  
 The Rustle Of Spring, Revolutionary Etude ultimately  
 Bud Powell who swirls in the curtain of the letter,

that black woman who crossed the hospital parking-lot as she spoke her last coherent words to me the mind wants to make Kali, black death goddess crossing parking-lot having laid her cancer stinger of endless hunger in the pitiful woman wild and nut-colored on the bed! All I know has rushed from me protein so Proteus may live, if there must be the shadow which is myth I want it that close, not have to speak death into black attendant heavy towards her car 7 stories down from the monolithic wings of hospital, absence of angel angel only in the glass you have poured full & I toss & toss this cold water wake up my mother from the last dreadful slumber by walking in unannounced

"oh, hello, Clayton..."

how much water is there in this glass, smell of pepper tree, dried oleander flower, stand in California back yard & know sex-economy is the energy household sprinkle of Aquarian stars of the woman I am pouring out, shallow pool on concrete, how much can she pour who is pouring thru me? No way to know other than to not fear the pouring, curtainless window is to pour and pour and now I am upon you shielded before the carnation bones of funereal lime-colored Flanner & Buchanan the lavender-brocaded casket with its heavy silver bars weight of weenies in my plate weight of porthole window weight of the haunt of house. I think my mother is consumed in this endless glass, treat decently this energy household this is thy core of ecology to live in a body maybe to end up nut, wild child, mother as man alone in the spinal woods of monster losing her hair, sack-cloth of cancer to ram food at one's mouth, smear into toothless gums a morsel of bad-smelling fish, confuse coffee-cup with pot & see her legs the accuracy of Grünwald's vision of the Christ, mottled and damp in sores legs that in

hose were monument by piano my fingers pressed in  
 & in, that this IS a casket lowered into shovel-sliced  
 Menonite earth, that this is the end of man over wch  
 rain & fog drizzle in the face of the sad Eshleman tribes,  
 pink rabbit-eyed faces of north Indiana women huddled  
 in the unending death of no one ever throwing water on  
 the possibility of happiness, is not this the meaning of  
 rain, is not this the meaning of sunlight to not let  
 hideous rabbit, the wild-child, park in the center of  
 our longing? Are not these jumpings on the mattress,  
 the dash to the faucet and the run after you laughing  
 the meaning of life? And what monument more than to  
 gauge her drift thru me, the difficult point at which I  
 would not turn on the tap but deny the spiritual economy  
 keep the glass empty, which, in the strength of her wish,  
 would have been not to write but play out the piano into  
 the settled negation that is Indianapolis. O mother, it  
 was in Kyoto I beheld thy Triple-Negation at the point I  
 first knew you were my mother! O tonight I would crown  
 that point, that you came to me there in the fury of  
 unacted desire and thru a spider, thorax red &  
 swollen, in the heat of summer transmitted to me  
 Isis, that who prunes us to let creation thru seeks  
 likewise our scattered members, & the boy at 12  
 who stood by white pickets behind the garage while  
 great Reich was actually thinking of him in Europe,  
 that boy a page before the court of women attacked  
 by wild beestes, who stood trembling while the white  
 table-cloths soaked in the wine, this boy before  
 the overturned banquet of humanity you brought to  
 bear upon the suffering spider body, who could thru  
 such rabbit-eyed tradition manifest yourself, for  
 the fountain you had at least to plant, you left your  
 stacking of coins at least an instant to take on the  
 spider body & be again the beginning of world.











Kenneth Irby:

## SEPTEMBER

He dealt a hand of cards. It had been years since he'd played at all. For all those not here, for a hand again or Lady Cadogan's handbook, that they would know, who came to play.

"I hitched, and walked mostly, over 8 hours to get here, and I'm certainly not going to go to bed now just because the sheets are ready."

For these 3 friends who were dead, who came at autumn equinox, on the first of the strong winds but before the first rains, come this close inland to the ocean, passing south like the heads of seals he'd seen basking off the cliffs that afternoon, passing on always close to the coast, that turned out to be pelicans when he saw closer, the spirits of those long dead, disparate but that he loved them, on and on.

They sat down to patience together. Each played a separate game, but played into a common layout each hoped would thwart the others, while the real conversation passed in glances, gestures and intonations in the midst of inconsequential small talk. All that they had come together for didn't last more than a few seconds, but so filled with trivia and fiddlings, so much to avoid blunting, he had to wait and struggle afterwards to remember utterly. Friends he had rarely ever been able to talk to, were trying to settle the most serious questions, of life and death. Like a dream, afterwards he could remember nothing of what anyone said except a few completely single utterances.

They hadn't told him anything, and they were gone.



The table top looked glassy for a few seconds, shimmered, watery, showing the ocean dimly in the distances, then faded into ordinary wood again. During the game it had been covered with green felt or baize, which meant a grassy plain, he thought at the time, which meant winter, or early spring, in this climate. Being miraculous, they were the crux of the whole day. These are the particulars, from which a decision can be reached.

He, Wood, left Berkeley about 5:30, catching a ride with a stained glass window maker going to Petaluma. That dropped him in Novato, center of the great titty cult, where two short rides with a long wait in between only got him to the outskirts of town near the new high school, after sundown and the dark coming on fast. No one stopped, very few cars went by at all, he started walking, figuring, though it would take him all night, if he got to Highway 1 he would eventually surely get a ride south to old Dog Town.

So he must have walked at least 15 miles altogether that night. Some high school kids out driving around drinking beer gave him a ride a can of beer and a cigarette, as far as the corner and stone bridge to Pt Reyes Station, marvelling that he would hitch out there in the middle of the night by himself. All that time passed evenly, lit by the very bright moon. Finally in Olema a couple from Palo Alto, a girl at Stanford and her hippie lover, picked him up, gave him some coffee and drove him to Flat Top Rd in Dog Town. "We just had to get out of Palo Alto, man, all those revolutionaries, you know, just talking about how they're gonna bring it all down." Wood marvelled, but only said, "It must be great to get away." "We been up 2 1/2, 3 days, you know, and never been north of the city on 1, so here we are. A real speed trip. Yeah, I went up to Ft Lewis, Washington, once with my parents, to see my father off to Korea, during the Korean War. He was 19, I guess, maybe 20, and I was a little kid, but I remember thinking it was all a bad thing. There was MacArthur, then Truman pulled him out, but they were both bad motherfuckers, man." Wood told

them he'd started high school the year the Korean War started (making him almost as old as this kid's father, he realized), and the shit of that had made him a communist to himself. They descended the two long winding groves of eucalyptus to the turnoff --

and patting the Riley's flank drove him on to Flat Top after he told them Dog Town had the greatest beach on the coast -- and then added, of course it's polluted now. "O wow, shit, man!" He almost went on to Palo Alto with them, the guy was so congenial to talk to and his girl so quiet seeking possibilities.

The way up Flat Top passed along a winding avenue of great eucalyptus surging more than the sea, which left a single patch of moonlight across the intersection, through which he passed to the object of his journey. In the field toward the ocean coming onto the butte cows lay not asleep with his passing. The firestation light was on. He turned down Lookout and passed unknown parties still going on. The way to Shih's and Shih's house were all dark but for the kid's room. Wood knocked, only the dog answered, no car, he figured they were gone, and lay down in the bike shed out front for an hour or more, till he heard the baby cry inside and got up, and saw Richard walk up, asked him if anybody was home, he said, yeah, just go in, and so came at last that night to rest, in Shih's sleeping bag, having forgotten his own, slept on the floor dreaming of street fighting, shooting and being shot, and fainting with the pain in the ambulance train.

The next day Wood wandered around the tip of the peninsula while his friend helped put up a greenhouse. He visited the O' Ryans and exchanged observations on the shift from East to West, it had been a very long time since he'd seen them, and the point had not dulled at all in the heart since Walter Prescott Webb on Dartmouth Street nine years before, in the long sea grass thick toward the ocean. He walked along the beach and sat by a tidepool staring through into the distances of the universe as it expanded, where the

red shift turned to blue. With some galaxies moving away from us at 10,000 light years a second, and the human synapse snap only a 1/10th of a second, over a few feet at most, where were we in such a scale, he thought -- here, right here, where our asses are, on earth staring into the tide-pool at the Vernon Image shape in the rock, washed over in foam as the surf rolled in. The tide was far in, and moving in further, driving Wood from the rocks and the beach. He drifted on to Grinne's and had a few beers, bought a six-pack and walked back to Shih's on the butte. Later that Saturday night after supper they left Rlene and the kids for a while and went back down to Grinne's and sat out on the sidewalk in front drinking beer and smoking dope with the local notables, looking at the Moon, telling fragmentary anecdotes and engaging the passerby.

In all these particulars, seeds lie. The primordial, as the Master said, points to the future, not the past. Lin Van Der Velde's little dance along the sidewalk as he took the joint Jack handed him, performed beneath the Moon the rites that were due Her. The gripping of the gut and then the release they all felt laughing at their own foolishness, Wood felt days later watching the raging of an immense forest fire above Berkeley, the old, the ancient peyote racking of the abdomen and then the laughter that had to follow to relax, tightening the balls.

He and Shih went on home, Jack drove them back, and sat up reading to each other for hours. Richard came in. They fixed some eggs. Everyone went to bed. But Wood, still staring at the table top. Then he was playing cards, shuffling, dealing, then came his ex-old lady's voice behind him calling him to bed, then came his own refusing the fresh laundered sheets, though in that house he slept alone and on the floor in a borrowed sleeping bag, then looking up, his friends were at the table, picking up their cards, sorting their hands, flicking their cigarettes. Who were they?

The nakwach symbol was on the backs of the cards. David Sandberg sat facing Wood, twisting his moustache

nervously with his left hand, head cocked to that side, with bemused faint smile. Sam Thomas was on Wood's left, looking more as he had first seen him than the last time, after the nuthouse fat -- thin face with pointed foxred goatee, the Missouri look askance, almost furtive smile of irony as if from under a flopped hat brim. On the right was Bill Lehnhoff, corpulent in mufti, alone of all of them absorbed in his cards, nervously tapping his Winston against the under-edge of the table, chewing his lower lip in the weight of his hand. But he got up and left after a few minutes, to piss, it seemed, and Reggie Parker took his place, dapper Durham Harvard black elegant, slim and languid. Lehnhoff, was he even dead? Only missing in action over Thailand, on Wood's birthday three years before. Come and gone. It seemed some foursome from a Progressive Club bridge party of his parents 30 years ago, except there were no women.

Everything happened instantaneously, as at the end of the Diamond Sutra, with the dream intensity. He could only lengthen it, telling himself later. He knew each of them was dead, except maybe Lehnhoff, and a suicide, but he couldn't say this to their faces, neither could they ever admit it, and any conversation depended on that, confronting them with their deaths? David turned as if at his kitchen table he'd just told of all the teas they'd tried which was the best. "Every night when I go home, I have to choke the telephone." That was an echo, Sanberg speaking in Wesley Long, probably the year David was born. His old dirty sleeve. My God. There was a photo made in the Greyhound bus station camera booth, of Phoebe sucking David's cock. Stuck in a notebook. Sam's sleeve touched Wood's hand as he adjusted his cards, the hem of an old beatup shirt. Everyone here was dressed shabbily, desperately, old and careful clothes, even Reggie's coat and tie were worn and greasy if you looked close. Trying to talk, to get their poor clothes dirtier, before the equinoctial winds blew them all off again to the interstellar vacancies.

Lehnhoff before he left pointed to a new pair of sandals he'd brought as a gift, with that brusque embarrassment of

giving a close friend something he obviously badly needs. Reggie giggled to himself, some witty commentary only he and the other shades could follow, out of which a phrase from an old letter came up audible, "Yes! Yes! It's I!", then a fragment, "probably for the wrong reasons", written in a copy of Sister Carrie given as a gift years before.

What did they all want from him? If he kept looking long enough he'd see everything he ever knew about these people. If they all stayed here long enough, everyone he'd ever known would show up too. All of them wanted touch again, the earthly again, out of those terrible vacancies of outer space, not some hand on the knee, as in a dream once he'd leaned forward to reassure Sandberg, or around the shoulder, or even a handshake, because they no longer shared any common substantiality. A rag of Sam's sleeve, but not Sam himself. They couldn't return to people they didn't know, only to some love, remembrance, the warmth of shared thought, the share of some touch of attention. Prayer, Wood thought, must be about this. They didn't know, desperate, wrenched from life, what they wanted, but from the living, release again, as if here, here, they might be free again, to continue, wherever that went, warmed anew.

They looked at him, despite all the elaborate other attention, unable to see each other or disinterested in other dead. They were here, and came with gifts, the motions of gifts, making him uneasy, in his gratitude, of accepting them. Alan had told him long ago, you're a hard man to do anything for, you have such a hard time accepting anything from anyone. All his life he'd been learning how to receive. What they wanted of him wasn't just what he gave, his love, but to receive theirs. To be open, as he'd told himself for years and years. To enlarge the space of the living. Nothing is lost. Take us when we come, we have no other place to go but those we love.

In the glassy surface of the table waves receded and pounded. It was the roar of the eucalyptus grove he was hearing, the wind was up, the door was somehow ajar and the wind was in cold, the post-alcoholic chill, he thought,

it's time to go to bed.

Where are you now? In the house of friends, on the northern coast of California, deep in the grip of the elements, altogether alive.

--- Sept 70 - Feb 71

Rae Armantrout:

(3 poems

RELEASE

Finally sight  
permits the random

leaning of dry mustard stalks  
the broken lines

the rearrangements  
of this poplar shade  
on open eye -

O no need to  
re-call

## THE PRINCE

That there are kinds  
is his business

He proclaims his favorite  
month, his favorite stone.

"....renowned for his judgement. He will choose  
among these Peerless Ones."

Knowing his stuff



## ZEN KOAN AND THE STUBBORN MAN

"The novice is asked to  
recall what his face looked  
like before his parents  
were born."

His face  
before his own birth?

It was a trick!

They would put him on the other side  
of the glass wall  
and in the water

from which  
no words  
would ever re-collect him.

They wished him  
to consent

to incarnate  
in

sixty  
fish

Will Staple:

(6 poems)

## MAY SEEM DULL

When we go on runs      we come back  
                  with what we      need  
 wood      fence materials,      food  
                  it may seem dull to you  
 wood stoves      mason jars  
                  bare walnut trees in sunset.

gas, beer, what is money for?  
                  traveling over old Stage sites  
                  doctoring ancient sweat lodge sites  
 a lost race, returning  
                  raise from the dead  
                                  sung back to life  
 like ancestors      descendants  
                  evoking  
                                  what we came for;  
 "those who go out for strong medicine  
                  get it  
 or do not come back at all."

## ONLY HE SINGS

(heard while meditating in nevada desert, the second quote is from wolfman jack, heard the night before, driving north)

"We are guilty of SO MANY deaths."

he had gently spoke.  
inside of ourselves... so many killings...

violent lust for power over others

"you understand, it doesn't matter how ugly you are,  
you gotta be 'specting that special someone EVERY  
MOMENT"

petty rivalry over  
food, putting everyone else inhibitedly  
down  
with a growl of breath being let out, so nobody can sing...

Only he sings

Who?

has absolutely no idea, no fixed project, vacant ---

they are so rare, disappear as soon as they open their  
mouths  
to speak a word unsung

--only their smile,  
the depth of the downward gaze  
of their silence and unbroken concentration, no self,  
no self confidence, only confidence in the realization  
of their own depth.

## TO FREDA, COYOTLCLAN

Freda gets up early  
 I can't get up for an hour  
 i'm so turned on

Still love a picture of beer  
 all the popcorn you can eat  
 down the road

The carpentry of my brothers amazes me  
 so intricate, extra-consciously subtle  
 i sit in mountain goat's house  
 on the side of a leaning garage  
 fire out, newly made window lite

Everything i've wanted, i have  
 and we haven't begun, we are...  
 are still strangers in wonderment

of canyon realms unfolding  
 on the edge  
 of all we hope to be, wilder  
 freshness, sun and bird song are creative  
 opportunities  
 all the problems

we bring with us,  
 Nature is unfinishably whole,  
 as we plunge into her gleam.

## DO YOU LIVE FOR YOURSELF, OR FOR OTHERS?

nobody matters, drink all you want,  
 your alone when you face death  
 no one loves you enough to save  
     your life, if they could  
         you would leave.

o creature who lives outdoors  
     on food he finds, never stealing  
         as is the human custom  
 when you look into an aimed arrow's  
     shaft, at a hand made point  
         or the 32 special indian rifle  
             IS it better to die?  
                 o no, come along

you can not leave   it   hangs on  
 your face, in your throat, how  
     you posture, feel about other people,

all   you think you are  
 you know at least that is untrue  
     tell me how i seem  
         it will be   uncomfortable  
             and i will feel  
     as if i' m learning  
         about something.

## RECOGNIZING LOOKS

very polite  
 east oakland type party  
     "choose your vice" a sly friend said  
 Shady women weave around the room  
     as if on missions      the lites go out  
 the music is so loud everyone's submissive  
 some people high, you don't know whats  
     coming on from the punch  
 people recognize you haven't seen for years  
     jr. high school pachucos  
         and also in the crowd  
 one or two other doctors, recognizing looks,  
 one or two old friends fade into the dark  
 room with girls and do not wish  
     a ride back home.

## IS IT TRUE?

Is it true  
 that if a friend were to think  
 warm blessings towards another  
 many miles distant      that those  
 blessings and positive life renewing vibrations  
 can be subconsciously sensed by the one thot of  
 so that he or she  
 might be benefited in a profound manner?  
 Is it true?

Please think of me as I think of you.

Stan Brakhage:

## SERGEI EISENSTEIN

Some men are caught, before their birth, by some monstrousness which tears them to pieces of horrible imagination ever after.

Some men are trapped, at birth, by national or geographical circumstances which reenact, thus replace, every terror imaginable.

Some men are stopped, in all previous tracks, by a quirk of event which, as it were, picks up every foetal and cultural trick-in-the-bag of their pre-birth trauma -- an occurrence which acts as a snag in the fabric of their thought ... an image, even, in their experience -- usually very early in their life -- which creates a symbol, as it were, of their birth-neurosis and supercedes any either natural or national symbolism... and it can be something as simple as a story, say -- and it can be something as simplistic as a picture or picture book.

I believe it was a picture book which replaced the foetal haunt of Sergei Eisenstein and, also, damned all societal influences in him from then on.

He was to become a film-maker from some instant -- when he turned the page of one picture over to reveal another ... from some instant on -- when one image replaced another in the flip of a book-image over... from some instant on to another -- when a miracle of shifting picture book imagery sent an electrical 'chill' down his child spine. It was a quality of thrilling exposure which must have managed an almost chemical shift in him: something imbalanced in his minutist physiological make-up was 'braced', forever

after, by this instant of tingling spine: I can guess this was what happened because his greatness was of that quality only possible in a man working out of "second nature", as it is called; and I can guess that this instant was inspired by a picture book because of the aesthetic process he created in all his work, both filmic and verbal, from then on.

But my 'guess' is conditioned by some similar pre-birth ghostliness, social disordering, and eventual snag-of-thought in myself, some chain-of-events perhaps utterly different from those I imagine as similar for Sergei; yet my 'guess' -- right down to "picture book" -- can be verified more than it normally could... apropos any other person... because he was an artist: and an art leaves this process of traumatization before, during, and very shortly after being born... and leaves it as naturally as a tree leaves patterns of veins in its leaves -- as, naturally, a sea-shell records its growth, and attendant hardship, in the carves and colors of etched and dyed calcium deposit.

But I don't mean to suggest that a man's creative life can be anything as simply achieved as that of a leaf or sea creature: a man, also, grows, of course, in patterns of veins, and carves his face, and flares his emotions in display of colors, which eventually 'set' as, say, "red-neck", "pasty-face," etc; but he takes no more note of this, moment to moment, than of leaves and shells -- nor does he take any eventual account of his surface fabric of wrinkles... the face he's made for himself, his skin textures or self-created-color... as expression-of-self: most men pay more attention to the color each was born with rather than any, called "subtle", change he's made for himself: the physiology of each man, thus, exists as a dream, to him: and it is his mentality which seems, to each and every one, the prime creative realm: each meets leaf's surface and shell-shape with a weave-of-thought he thinks he's made-up for himself.

This is false!

This fault in Man is exposed as such, and best, in Art!



An art is made as naturally/creatively as a face, a leaf -- each form of art as necessary-a-container as a shell --- each thing made by a maker as preordained-a-mark as the thrusting tubes of chlorophyll -- and as individual-a-thrust as each leaf's necessary measure.

Tree-leaves and leaves-of-books achieve their marks similarly.

Each sea-shell and each shell-of-ear contains the outside musical possibilities inherent from birth -- the former, the sea creature, a chamber of, say, calcium carbonate which receives a world of vibrations... vibrations being The World that the bit-of-meat/creature expands and recoils within: whereas Man's ear is meat-pushed-out -- the latter a flesh sound-catcher... the bone, within this flesh, the drum of expansion and contraction of Man's hearing -- in space, rather than shape -- which exists as sound, rather than World lived within, and which, therewith its vibrations, electrifies the brain.

Think of a man with a hollow sea-shell placed, cupped, around his ear. Think of him, then, hearing what he calls "the music of the spheres". It is his flesh ear -- thus his face, his hair, his coloring all over -- which he equates with a dead sea-shell or dried-out leaf: but the thoughts prompted by his ear-bones prompting brain do seem, to him, the thing comparable to creatively living Nature in any, as he would say, "manifestation."

He would not honor the shape of his ear as anything creatively his: and this disownment of physiology... this shunning of his living surface... creates the net where Darkness has him/Man in a catch-of-thought that's often locked before his birth.

Yet, grounded as each man is by pre-ordained-thought, this shunning of his surface-life prompts the need, in each and every man, to create a field of surfaces beyond himself. When these are made thru the human process called "Art", these surfaces come into being as naturally as any living surface: and they can, by any man, be recognized as such

--for they are either fashioned as shields or, if Art, as illuminations... either as the heraldic banner of The Light or the guiding Light, itself, against all of The Dark in him -- as such as his skin... and as such as is of him, whoever made it: and these surfaces, separate from Man -- yet of him -- move naturally against thought... as naturally as vegetation thrusts against gravity: and The Darkness -- whatever that is (and we'll come to it again later) -- finds itself defeated, a little, on its own undergrounds by a fielding of all surface tension... and defeated, a lot, by this field-in-time which, historically, we call "Aesthetics".

Aesthetics is a collection of dead sea shells.

It is a leaf press-dried between the leaves of a book.

It is a marker on the grave of thought.

But it can also be seen, childishly, as a picture book.

Let's work back -- to this moment of young Sergei looking in a picture book... let's work back to this instant -- from something of his he'd made as a grown man: in his first film... "Strike"... he superimposed the furry faces of animals over human features. These actors are 'villains', in "Strike" -- strike-breakers, in fact -- and are introduced by sub-titles as nick-named: "Monkey", "Fox", etc. Such suggested totemism was not particularly original-in-itself nor very spectacular in this film: but the technical steps which arrive-at this effect in Sergei's first motion picture achieve an aesthetic particular to him: first, the villains are referred-to by their animal nick-names: secondly, a pet-shop is introduced, so that the faces of the animals and the men may be viewed separately in a natural context: then, third, the faces of men and animals are superimposed. The whole sequence has, as it is, the effect of (1) 'title', then (2) comparison-of-image thru filmic 'cuts' which are very like turns-of-pages, and finally (3) the combination of man/animal faces as they might occur in-the-mind remembering both simultaneously. There is very little attempt to make the animal face-shape conform to the human. It is an *idée fixe* being expressed.

Something alien as an animal had ravaged personal being in the womb: at his birth, the mouth of The World had opened to swallow him: the teeth and claws of air, then, had raked his body warmth: he was born out of a broken bag of streaming water.

Later, flipping a book leaf would turn a human into an animal before his eyes, or vice-versa, and back again: this image transformation -- subject to the will of the young viewer -- would absorb the terrified energies of the earlier occurrence... give the childish viewer some seeming grip, again, as he'd thought he'd had in the womb, on his destiny being born... and replace it with a process he would fulfill ever after.

And the water? -- the out-pouring from the broken bag-of-water at birth? ... The first fast cutting to be found in the work of Sergei Eisenstein is the sequence of streams-of-water, from fire hoses, shattering against a mass of people, drowning individuals in its streaks of diagonal whites. Most 'deaths', in the early films of Sergei, are by water -- the very 'threat of death' signaled by moving or rapidly cut white diagonals... the instant of 'death' signified by a ragged white splash -- this latter image evolving, in later work, to smoke and/or dust-puffs, white funeral dress, etc: but Death is always, in his work, diagonally heralded and whitely, explosively, fulfilled.

Have you ever watched a child with a picture book? -- seen his sudden excitement expressed in rapid turns of the white lines pages become when flipped? ... watched this whirl of papers-become-emotion erupt into a fountain of blurring movement? -- a splash of book-leaves caught in the shuffle of backward and forward motion?

Sergei met his first living death in a turn of the page: an animal image replaced one of a human -- a picture of a child, perhaps: Sergei thrashed wildly, then, with pages becoming like wings-in-flight to escape... and he seemed to die, all the same -- all the same as before in the womb.

In "The Battleship Potemkin", his second film, the

first fast cutting occurs when a frustrated sailor reads words written around a plate he is drying, then smashes the circle of that plate, in diagonal arm movements, to its broken fragments: but previous to this act, this same sailor is seen in a roomful of swaying diagonal ropes holding hammocks -- himself in one, as in a womb... himself hurt then, by a bestial officer -- himself crying himself to sleep again. When the leader of the mutiny, the Hero, then, is killed, he falls, first, into a loom of ropes, then slips this accidental 'hammock-womb' to the death-splash ending of him.

The whole threat-of-death drama, on "The Battleship Potemkin", develops beneath diagonal ship's cannons, reaches climax when a white tarpaulin is thrown over a group of disobediant sailors -- like a limp page over a picture -- and they are ordered shot... The resultant mutiny acts itself out as a series of variations on this original theme -- diagonal stair patterns and running sailor legs culminate in bursts of gun-powder white or ocean splash or both... diagonal candlesticks are crushed and piano keys smashed in, even, the priest's cabin, delicately echoing this primal scene in an almost Mozartian variation -- a miniature, as it were, culminating in pistol explosions.

It all, this enacted rebellion, has the authenticity of 'the real' -- moved the world of viewers to believe in the immediacy of its happening -- because it was informed, in him/Sergei, by events more remote than dream... events that took place before his birth, before thought, before whatever he thought he knew and could remember... events that later, then, took shape in the life-and-death thrashing of a book caught between his pre-destined hands, his eyes, his mind's eye -- his mouth-of-an-eye pre-ordained to swallow The World.

Let us come back to the term "The Dark" as it applies to The Soul of Man, and define it: The Dark, then, is any force which pre-ordains a man. That definition -- which will serve us very well, in this essay -- permits "The Light", to be "Destiny"... as distinct opposite of ordination

--opposite, therefore, of both personal order and the order of, say, a nation.

These terms: "The Light" and "The Dark": are traditionally interchangeable, in Orthodox Christian Russia, with: "God" and "The Devil". The motion picture medium is the first instrumentation which can express this interchangeability directly: and Sergei Eisenstein was the first Russian man to take advantage of that possibility. For "The Battleship Potemkin" he created a devil priest, made up of black lines of evil expression on white-of-face, white hair and beard first seen as if streaming hell-fire's smoke -- the beastliness of The Priest, his Jehovan hair... the manliness of him, his features struggling to achieve bestial expression -- each image a contradiction... a complex of interwoven Destiny and pre-ordination -- the apparition of The Priest, a portrait of the very war of Dark and Light which makes his Devil/God image possible on motion picture screen.

Sergei himself acts the part of The Priest of "Potemkin" -- covers his face with a make-up beard, thick eyebrows, wig, etc., and plays this character apart from all others: for it is a black priest he creates, yet bearded white... the only ambiguous -- therefore 'three-dimensional' -- roll in the film: oh, The Priest is clearly 'villain', as dictated by Communist policy; but he is a jolly 'villain', a humouresque symbol of God's 'good', humanly moving -- as given a depth-of-characterization by Eisenstein's very features... his rapidly moving, thus 'flashing' eyes, expressively 'pug' nose, ironic/pressed lips, always as if about to laugh-at-self... and the whole charming personality of young Sergei poking winks and smirks and happy self-mockery thru the pasted-on hair, the animal-mask, as it were, and/or God's mask, too, over human face -- an effect very like some fierce Sun-visage breaking thru white clouds in a child's illustration.

(Sergei later claimed the part of The Priest in "Potemkin" was played by a gardener: but he admitted donning The

Priest's robes and a fake wig to 'stand in' for The Priest's fall down a flight of steps in the film: even if he only did this stunt shot, that image stands then for the single image of Eisenstein in all his films -- that 'fall', therefore Identification-enough for the purposes of this essay... "The idea of performing the stunt was too tempting", he said -- Sergei's features and the gardener's, under hair, similar enough to tempt fate itself into portrait.)

The Priest, in the film, is Devil -- and even actively hinders the movie's 'good', white sailor, mutiny; but he is primarily a passive villain, clutching his crucifix and hiding behind his Bible... that "Book of books", as it's called... like a mischievous child caught, at play with his toys and fairy-tale stories, in midst of some adult quarrel utterly beyond him; and, like most children in such circumstance, he is on-the-side of the adults who would have things continue as-they-are -- on-the-side of Authority; and he is made peevish enough, by this interruption of his play, this danger to the security of his, say, play-sword/crucifix and his book, to strike-out against the invasion of his 'nursery' by these disruptive young-adults/the-sailors of the Potemkin 'family.'

The Priest is also Beast, as Sergei plays him, because of his beard. The beard is almost always villain, in itself, in the films of Eisenstein -- "the sign of the beast"... Sergei's childhood animal enemy -- superimposed, and growing then, on his face. His clear heroes are clean-shaven, or no more than mustached, in his earlier films. The propaganda of The State made Sergei equate 'enemy', thus 'beard', with authoritarianism of the old regime: and the heavily-bearded characters Sergei films in, for instance, "The Old and The New" (also called "The General Line") are always those favoring 'the old' and resisting 'the new'. Even in his last film, "Ivan The Terrible: Part 2", Sergei takes particular delight in the sequence which depicts Ivan cutting-off the beards of his enemies and ordering that all Russians be beardless: but there is a kind-



of-beard which Sergei, in later films, comes to accept -- a close-cropped, well-trimmed beard... Lenin's beard. Perhaps his coming-to visual terms with this particularity of beard begins in his third film, "Ten Days That Shook The World" (or "October", as it was originally called): in this film, the hero has-to-be Lenin: but, significantly enough, when Sergei first pictures Lenin, he has him disguised in a wrap-of-bandages concealing, yes! his beard.

The features of later bearded heros, "Alexander Nevsky" and "Ivan", would be black: and the actors, who played these rolls, would struggle dramatically to express their whitely human facial emotions in opposition to this stance-of-black, this animal hair, upon them. Both the Christ-like trim of the beard of Alex and the more devilish cut of Ivan's hair operate visually in contrast to each's features and create the prime visible complexity-of-character in what becomes, in "Ivan", a black-and-white, almost musical, 'study' of the struggle of good and evil on the facial surface of singular man.

The beard which Sergei finally found acceptable for his latter-day complicated protagonists -- this beard of Lenin -- is the one European West has most come to accept as that of The Devil... The Devil's beard being, for mid-European Christianity the carefully barbered, thus thoughtfully intentioned, one -- the cosmetic beard which did not grow, thus, naturally. But Russian Orthodox Christianity was older, closer to the struggle against paganism and all it might represent of Nature, the natural: thus it came to be that only priests, above pagan suspicion, and later members of the ruling class, could safely let their hair grow as it did naturally: all others tended to arouse suspicion with unclipped hair. In post-Revolutionary Russia, when The Priests came, then, to be viewed as 'bad', their traditional beards immediately became their prime visual target-of-criticism -- were attacked, as if they were Medusa's coils, by those who hated Priests.

As it happened, Sergei did not particularly hate The

Priests; but he did hate beards. Neither Orthodoxy nor Communist propaganda moved him, as Artist, to sufficient passion for him to make immortal images of any of either Christianity's or Politburo's symbols: but, by luck, his complex personal struggle with hair-as-animality could mesh with Communist cosmetic dictates, in this war of styles; and his fascination with The Devil's beard, as possible complexity-of-God could take its cues from Lenin's taste: it was the same Artist's luck that Medieval painter sensualists had in "The Garden of Eden", which permitted them to depict the nude human body, or that masochist Grünewald had in having Christ's crucifixion for acceptable subject of gruesome torture, or that Goya had, in excuse of patriotism, for lovingly depicting slaughter.

The only actor's part that Sergei ever played in his films was this one of black priest. In terms of his whole life's individual stance, this roll in moving images constitutes a definitive self-portrait, as deeply biographical as any of young Rembrandt -- tho' it is a portrait more like one of Durer's images-of-self... that is, it is a very symbolic self-portrait -- tells its story of conflicting personae, as well as person, via symbolic object as much as facial feature: thus what may first appear as ambiguity, of character, can come to be appreciated as incredible complexity of same... God and The Devil fighting this most particular battle for the soul of Sergei -- Sergei in disguise -- The Devil in disguise, of Priest -- Priest in disguise behind the animality of historical God -- God in disguise under a make-up beard. The Priest's acted death occurs, also, in this quality of 'ambiguity' -- which we can appreciate as personal, self-portrait, 'honesty' ... the simple truth that, as Sergei did not die, this priest-self-symbol of him only closes his eyes, one at a time, in obvious sham-of-death -- a sham that is so playful as to enact itself as a 'knowing' wink at last image of The Priest: the audience must assume he was thrown overboard with the rest of the authorities: this is never shown.



It is, therefore, of the nature of a pre-ordained death -- having nothing, whatever, to do with Destiny and/or The Light which all living things are destined to follow: The Devil, or 'Prince of Darkness' has it, thus... this assumption of the death of The Potemkin Priest: but his clutch of crucifix and book, his childish behavior and final wink, were destined from the first -- as it was that Sergei should, someday, play something of some-such thing as this priest can be seen to be... destined that Sergei could make an image of his face, struggling thru beard, which would haunt The World -- there was such energy, there from the turn-of-page, as could move mountains forever after: the trap-of-energy was pre-ordained, pre-birth: the trap was sprung between two pictures in a children's book... his Destiny arranged, as it always is, at energy's release, when Sergei exercised his finger's will to move a paper edge from right to left and back again and then -- then made energy his... as it was always meant to be -- be growth up into The Light of the sun... as any creature's habit of pre-ordained form becomes energy's fashion -- seeking infinite possibilities.

We can now dispense with such terms as "Devil" and "God" -- for Sergei had very little use, or need, for them ... tho' he was socially stuck, as every Western man, with these historical terms at start: He turned, in his college studies, to The East to escape this traditionally pre-ordained trap of his imagination: the picture book was the key to this choice, also, in his living -- thus... all East does make its terms, from scratch, of images rather than words -- its complexities of thought from image-combinations, superimpositions, in the hieroglyphs of its written language.

Let's go back to the book -- the picture book... for he was that young, then, that the words within it were only images, too, to him: and let us see him as 'child of his Times', then -- already trapped, at birth, by genetics... trapped, since birth, by codes of behavior, in everyone around him, begun in each womb; and let us see him seeing

himself --as if colored paper were a mirror... mirror the only other flat-image feed-back he'd ever had: let us see him flat on the page, then -- with, perhaps, a red and black button coat... against a white land scape, flat with little knolls upon it -- made curved, or three-dimensional, by the slightest push of his fingers against the surface of the paper -- and dark tree trunks... thrusting straight down to the ground, page bottom -- tree trunks made to waver and coil diagonally by a sleight-of-hand push against picture-orders of the page: sudden thrust of, say, knuckles, and the image has become... what? -- fox in his lair? -- wolf tearing at the hide of a deer? -- a lion mane in African scene? ... no! -- something more like a dog or cat upon its hind legs standing upright where, in the other picture, the child had been -- some Russian puss-in-boots, then? ... no -- some more ferocious creature glaring out of an indoor scene -- some mythological monster, whatever its whiskered feature! Sergei, later, could not remember any better than I can, herein, imagine the picture; but he certainly flipped back and forth between images and, then, desperately rummaged among the word-filled pages in search for the grace of white; and, as he man-handled these pre-ordained pages, the lines of print curved and seemed to crawl -- letter orders displacing previous letters in a 'movie' of slightly-shifting shapes on white -- as if masses of black 'worker' ants were invading a sugar bowl in his hands.

The transformation was complete -- Sergei's energy released... his possibilities, within this particular form, become infinite: he had his Destiny from then on.

The Form, of transformation, became Style, in him -- his Style...

— And Style, in a man, is Soul -- his soul manifest to others only thru his style... his living style... and the frozen etch of the style of everything he makes...

And Soul is, simply, the source of destined energy -- released in the style of the original moment of transformation... a form that can become "form of Art" for fullest

possible release of energy significant to others.

Nothing else mattered one damn to Sergei, from then on: he used all societal damns, inhibitions of human will, to trigger some semblance of the original release -- to trigger "some semblance" rather than simply "release" because the original release of his energy had occurred because of semblances... Thus he became a visual Artist: and the medium of motion pictures was, to him, naturally, as if made for him.

Long before he ever knew of the existence of movies he was being prepared for them. Within days, or weeks, of the original transformation, his destiny was surely working itself thru events of his daily life -- making eventuality of it ... thus:

Shoe laces went one over the other -- and then one under... and then thru each other, folded together -- and pulled apart to gather or come asunder, any-which-way other than was an order:

The books had letters, as well as pictures: and he was making the letters be in his mind, as creatures -- along a line, as martialled people... one over the other -- twisting together... to gather -- together:

Before he could talk he came to hate the face of the moon... to love the sun... to hate the sun -- to want to turn it off and on... to turn the picture page of the sun upon -- what? ... shoe laces ... letters ... whatever ... what forever was crisis in him -- prompting the original crisis, in the womb, and the exact measures, the formal style, of his deliverance therefrom.

Thus he became the first film artist to believe-in totem worship -- to create a dance of animal identification around the fire of movie screen: and, to release this fearful image with another... a flip-book aesthetics that came, even when 'slowed', to be called "Film Montage" -- a term almost synonymous with his name.

By the means of rapid, even 'jump', cutting -- and by intercutting for association-of-image -- he made animal

totem polarities of human agony which have haunted The World ever since... the stone lion in "Potemkin"... the dead horse, as the failing spirit of 'the people', in "Ten Days That Shook The World" -- this image, also derived of sculptured statue in previous shots, fallen limp as flesh ... its white mane replacing the black hair of a dead woman ... its body dangling from a draw-bridge rising, in a series of almost symphonically visualized criss-cross lines, to a singular diagonal -- from which the body of the horse drops, finally, to watery death.

None of the things one writes about can possibly account for the haunting power of this series of shots: it is an energy beyond memory which informs it: it is the formal integrity of a man haunted by a turn-of-the-page which energizes it.

The 'Odessa Steps sequence', from "Potemkin" is a masterpiece of steps become pages of a book spilling its martial letters, their diagonals, out of itself -- spelling Death to all irregular laces of masses as have, in its previous sequence, straggled down to the docks... the rope-like lines of people, who move among white rectangular buildings throughout the films of Eisenstein: as these coils of human are undone by militant lines of soldiers -- all of a type -- they begin to be revealed, by Sergei, as individuals facing Death... their white faces to be shattered by black streams of their blood: they move, enmass, as veins on a hand: they are scattered by militant precision in a flurry of diagonals: they die, each one, as a monster -- some mythological monster... created of blood broken loose from all destined form.

Only, finally, in "Ivan The Terrible" does this ant-mass of humanity achieve a triumphant means to its ends, as Sergei envisioned them; and then, therein this last film of his -- his testament, then -- the line-of-people forms its as-if-hieroglyph across an expanse of snow... the people come to plead with Ivan to be their king again. In this perhaps most haunting scene of all Eisenstein, Ivan finally

raises his head so that the coil of people, beyond his window, seems to trickle off the end of his pointed beard. It took Sergei a lifetime of shuffling motion picture diagonals, and fussing with animal hair, to achieve this immortally moving black-on-white stencil of himself's/Ivan's physical and cosmic alignment with a glyph of the people -- whose hierarchy included, then, veins, ropes, shoe-laces, lettered enigmas, etc., a hieroglyph begun before he was born.

Government dictate would not permit Sergei to show, in his second film, that the mutinous sailors of "The Battleship Potemkin" were forced to scuttle their ship, seek sanctuary in foreign lands, to save themselves from being shot -- anymore than Stalin's dictatorship would permit him to show "Ivan The Terrible: Part 2" or make the "Part 3" he'd intended... wherein Ivan, in a monastery, was to confront God: but these censorships could not, for an instant, stop him from making the complete art of the picture-book trauma, again and again, using whatever means of plot the censors forced upon him -- whatever the locale of the photography or actors permitted him... could not stop him from developing this primal scene, film to film, for fullest exposition of his most personal vision... could not stop this growth of Art, in him, until they stopped him from filming at all and, eventually killed him -- 'broke' his heart, called "heart attack", a few months after "Ivan The Terrible: Part 2" and all hope of filming "Part 3", were taken away from him.

His fourth film, "The Old and The New", and his fifth, "Alexander Nevsky", were both closely watched and actively supervised by government censors during production: the former was 'assigned' to Eisenstein -- was expected to be a propaganda film, extolling the virtues of 'the collective farm' ... was governmentally intended, primarily, for peasant farmers -- was, therefore, an assignment expected to discipline Sergei, himself, from... as a Communist bureaucrat might have put it... "all such artiness and high-falutin' fast-cuts and stuff-and-nonsense" as he, Sergei,

had created in his previous films -- : "The Old and The New" had to be very simple and stupidly straight forward: I'm sure that those who assigned it to him, then known by them as 'the big city' / 'world famous' film-maker, thought of the assignment as a means to bring him "down to earth", as they might have put it: it was, mid-1920s, the beginning of the era of 'cutting down' any such individualism as had surfaced in Russia immediately after The Revolution -- an era that was to end in a 'purge' more terrible than war or hunger had effected... a bureaucratic purge which would cut many men down to six feet under the earth, in unmarked graves of Siberia, for the slightest -- often imagined -- offence against bureaucracy... bureaucracy moving -- as it always does -- to create its safety in Fascism.

Despite supervision, by these dangerous office-workers lording it over him, Sergei managed to attack 'the bureaucratic' directly in "The Old and The New": he has a scene where the peasant protagonists, begging for a tractor to save the community harvest, are given the usual evasive treatment of 'the bureau', by superior-acting 'white-collar' workers too busy to see them etc. -- until one of the farmers pounds his fist on a desk and demands the tractor in the name of "Lenin"... a name which, in this film, produces a tractor immediately -- as magically as Aladdin's lamp.

The implications were clear: the man, Eisenstein, had gone-to-war against the office worker -- a war he was certain to lose, in Russia as anywhere else... a war no individual can win in his lifetime -- outnumbered as any individual is, however popular his cause, by this white-collar corp, this largest collective, with narrowest objectives, in the history of the world.

The Artist, Sergei within him, could and did easily win again and again: when they sent him 'to the farm', to humiliate him, he absorbed the world of the farmer into the light of his most personal vision -- immediately shifted his dramatic necessities to the accomodations of folk-tale... "Lenin"



the magic word to work miracles... a mechanical cream-separator or tractor the talisman to defeat all evil -- and he even used broad peasant humor, the form of 'the dirty joke', to develop his/Sergei's totemism further... dressing the cow, for the mating with community's new bull, as a bride, complete with veil and crown of flowers etc.... intercutting bull's head, and cow's, with the laughing and weathered faces of farmers, wives, boys, girls, and happy children playing 'marriage': the whole-of-the-film could not be Art -- it was too 'sat-on' by censorial office-workers... too loaded with the paper notions of propaganda; but Sergei did manage sequences as magical as anything else in his work -- thus endangered himself... not from these sequences -- which 'passed' the censors as 'showy' but otherwise 'harmless' tricks-of-his -- but from some sense of growing power this growth of art-in-him gave the man/Eisenstein at this difficult Russian Time, when Communism shifted itself into the gears of total dictatorship.

Sergei failed to conform to 'The Party Line', as his imaginary farmers had done; and he might actually have been killed, in the Politburo 'purges' of the 1930s, had he not left Russia for a world tour which was, also, to end in a series of failures-to-conform -- failures to find any kind of an Artist's home... to complete any film and/or escape the confines of censorship. He did, surely, take this trip in hopes his international reputation would succeed for him better elsewhere than in Russia: it didn't: and his worldly self, thus, prevented The Artist in him from completing a single sequentially moving image for almost ten years.

He began a film, called "Romance Sentimentale" which was commissioned by a famous opera singer, exile of old Russia, and was to be a portrait of her and of -- as he envisioned it -- that condition of nostalgic living she was having. It begins with a thrashing to tree-trunk diagonals, blackly moving lines against the white 'page' of the sky, all intercut with the rush of sea-surf and its 'explosions' of white, in thematic answer to cut trees falling down: but,

when it came to images of the woman, in her living room, sitting at her piano, singing songs of memorium of old Russia, he could not bring himself to complete the film -- left it to his companion photographer, Edward Tisše, and script-writer, Grigori Alexandrov, to fulfill the demands of the commission... to give it a happy, show-biz. ending in singing and singing -- this first sound film, he'd ever attempted, thus ending as musical comedy.

He failed in Hollywood, naturally, too -- script after script rejected... month after month wasted -- without a chance to even begin filming.

He failed in Mexico, after months of filming what was to be called "Que Viva Mexico", under commission by Upton Sinclair -- one of the so-called "cocktail communists" of American thirties... these men, living in the hellish contradiction of being wealthy proletarians -- rich 'poor folk'... or somesuch -- thus hack Idealists... these men, then, proving more destructive to any possible art or, even, human understanding than the worst materialist business man that dishonest commerce had ever created -- Sinclair finally taking all Sergei's Mexican footage away from him and selling it piecemeal to "Castle Films", etc., for travelogue movies.

Everywhere Eisenstein went he was 'the toast of the town', was praised, was 'wined and dined', was promised almost anything by any and everyone in fashion -- his ego pumped and puffed-up beyond any previous recognition: but the artist in him was permitted nothing in midst of this fame... thrashed hopelessly amidst his worldly 'favor', midst broken promises, fits and starts at film-making -- managing only fragments of aesthetic haunts... such as Mexicans in hammocks streaked by rippling diagonal shadows... heads of native martyrs stomped-to-death under horse hooves in 'splashes' of dust... totemism, thru animal and monster masks, among candied skulls and other symbols of Death-worship in Spanish festival... etc. -- fragments, finally edited into fragmentary completion by Marie Seaton, and



others, years later.

Finally Sergei Eisenstein returned to Russia. Kenneth Rexroth tells the story of a conversation with Eisenstein, shortly before his departure from America, wherein he/ Sergei admits he's being forced back to The Soviet Union -- reportedly says that 'they' "have something on him" / his "homosexuality"... that 'they' had threatened to "expose" him: "Let them," said Rexroth: "Oh, no!", he'd replied: "It would kill my mother."

He failed at his first attempted film, again, in Russia: "Bezhin Meadow": and had it taken away from him. He seemed trapped at every move he made, each movie he attempted to make, each script of his which censors refused to accept: He was too famous to squeak-thru any cracks of Politburo inattention. Finally, in 1938 on the eve of Russian war with Germany, he was permitted to complete his fifth film: "Alexander Nevsky": -- thought of, propagandistically, as an historical "review", so to speak, of the defeat of German Knights by Russian heroics... a kind-of musical-comedy warning to Hitler -- and an operatic 'pep-talk' to the Russian people. Sergei was, naturally, supervised more closely than ever while making this film -- a censor continually 'at his sleeve' during all photography... looking over his shoulder each editing instant: again, no total work-of-art was possible: but he did manage some sequences-of-images sufficiently in his personal tradition to accomplish immortally haunting pictures -- that which is all, of him or any man, which can honestly be called "Art"... sufficient to the desperate needs of the/his person to haunt all other persons -- remind them of their, however other, ghosts in the matter of becoming individual living creature.

In "Alexander Nevsky", children are thrown into the fire, disappear into a puff of smoke: Teutonic Knights are masked as beasts and totemed with the horses they, night-marishly, ride upon; and they are -- as absolutely horizontal lines of black, on snow and ice white, finally 'defeated' by being linearly broken up ... in the greatest

thrash of heroic diagonals yet achieved by Sergei... and destroyed, horse/man, men-limbs/hooves, masks and all, a piece at a time, thru black cracks in rapidly-cut ice-breaks, to watery death -- The Artist, Sergei, at desperately happy work again!

His theoretical writings, at this time, defended every aesthetic stance he took in absolute confirmation of his bookish haunt: each use, by him, of letters was a word-by-word thrash of language against itself, 'fighting fire with fire' -- every sentence as if made to sentence language to obliteration by image... to make every verb an actually moving hierarch -- every noun a glyph of thing. For instance, he graphed his aesthetic statements as if he were writing film-scripts; and he was quick, whenever possible, to make linguistic assumptions which compacted all flow-of-language into blocks-of-sense, as if sentences and individual words were no more finally useful than as sign-posts.

He even graphed Sergei Prokofiev's music score to stand-in for the line of Knights in the image it accompanies -- assuming the viewer would 'read' the line of soldiers, right to left... making Prokofiev's eighth note marks occur exactly -- assuming average speed of reading -- where Teutonic flags occur in the line of, thus, 'type': his/Eisenstein's entire interest in sound was, in theoretical fact, the effect it might have upon directing attention to the desired 'reading' of image... that a musical beat, for instance, coinciding with a particular movement, could fix attention on one or another area of composition specifically -- just as dialogue could replace sub-titles, thus literature, altogether. These two Sergeis, working closely together, appropriated the signatures of music and forced them to illustrate images, very much as images had traditionally illustrated text.

Working along lines of operatic thought and ballet aesthetics, Eisenstein and Prokofiev attempted sound-and-image combinations akin to Song and Dance, at Classical best. They worked closer-than-ever together on Eisenstein's next film: "Ivan The Terrible" making all music

essentially accompaniment-of-image in Tchaikovskian tradition -- as purely illustrative as all words, in "Ivan", finally are... all dialogue utterly dramatic in the Eastern Theatrical tradition -- as unliterary as a Western man could make it.

Although Eisenstein was an actively passionate Reader -- exhaustively studying whatever literature, or even newspaper, which came his way, his whole life-long -- he was subconsciously, and therefore most naturally, against The World of Letters as such, as he'd inherited it... thus was aesthetically up-against the cultural fact that "movies", in Russia, are called "Kine", a word derived from The Greek that means "writer of movement": he did everything in his power to alter that sense of it -- Pudovkin's sense of it... Vsevolod Pudovkin his life-long friendly-enemy... Pudovkin the film-maker he forever argued-with... the Pudovkin he beat at Chess, once, to win the 'right' -- the 'stakes' of that game -- to cast him in the roll of "The Anarchist", the emotionalist in rags and chains, in "Ivan The Terrible."

"Parts 1 and 2" of this last work of Sergei constitute the most perfectly realized unfinished film in the history of Motion Pictures. The success of "Alexander Nevsky", in the eyes of Stalin, permitted Sergei the greatest freedom he, or any film-maker in Russia, had ever had in the act of making: censorship was to come later, at Stalin's displeasure with, particularly, the ending of "Part 2" -- which suggests the corruption that complete power... whether Ivan's or Eisenstein's or Stalin's... effects in the individual man -- Ivan seen, at end of this second part, in a dictatorial control of Russia accomplished thru a series of brutal murders.

I do not think Sergei imagined, for an instant, that Stalin would take "Ivan" personally: for Sergei was completely absorbed, in himself, confronting a beast in a children's picture book; and -- like all artists -- he was utterly naive... when at-work... as to the effect his beast might have upon the beastliness of others -- tho' he had been warn-

ed of the danger he was running, along paths of "Ivan": his script-writer, Alexandrov, finally had said he would have nothing to do with the project: and his cameraman, Tissé, abandoned him in midst of making "Part 2".

It had been assumed... and he must have assumed it too, that these life-long companions were essential to his work: but their refusal to complete "Ivan" with him destroyed this myth -- the myth of 'collaborative Art' ... that an art can, or ever does, come from more than one man: for "Ivan The Terrible" is clearly, with and without Tissé, all of-a-piece and absolutely Sergei's greatest film.

Each movement within its every composition is perfectly realized Ballet. Each composition is as structured as Architecture, each stroke of light as controlled as if it were created in oil paint or fashioned as the reflective surface of mosaic. Everytime anyone, or thing, moves in "Ivan", he she or it shifts to a new compositional stance in relation to everything else in the frame, including the minutiae of distant landscape and/or the carve of architecture, the curves of its arches seen-from-within, and the compositions of murals on the walls surrounding The King, in his palaces, churches, etc., and the conspiritors against him, hemming him/them in, as if these nets of paint, on the walls behind each court action, were traps -- or Death itself -- for any living creature... either Ivan or his enemies ... moving in a foreground of enclosing illustration -- as if every human action were a desperate dance-of-life between two positions of 'full-stop' in a painted composition... the whole film moving inexorably under the influence of its fatal backgrounds -- as if each human gesture were a shift of mosaic or a fragment of shape seeking freedom from some frozen ordination in a picture-book -- seeking, each/his Destiny thru dramatic momentum and emotional speech -- each contradicting, at every turn and word, the 'tapestry' of background hemming him in.

But "Ivan The Terrible" is essentially a work of Resignation -- Sergei becoming like the 'Ivan' he imagines...

resigned, increasingly to the 'preordained' -- at the same time he celebrates Destiny-as-movement... each sign-of-Life, in this film, the most beautifully choreographed triumph of Sergei's will imaginable -- Ivan's every gesture memorable for all Time. Motion, herein, is almost always emotional: yet, too, his human actors are as thoughtfully moved, from stance to yet more static stance, as if they were psychological 'weights' of point-counter-point in a game of intellect. The two prime worldly traditions informing middle-aged Sergei for this work were The Chinese Opera and Chess: but his Artist inspiration was, as always, picture and page -- tho' he'd learned to turn his images slowly... thoughtfully... in his, still desperate, mind, and to feel each move with the care of an experienced man -- stepping, now, slowly along his difficult way.

Fast-cutting, Sergei's main rhythmic means, is at a minimum in this last work: and Vision, in "Ivan", is a slow evolution rather than, as earlier, a mutant leap-of-imagination.

Youthfully, it, all Art, had been, for him, rapidly-cut lines on white --

curves of lines making shape...

shapes 'filled-in' with shades of gray and black and white...

white turning over and over -- faster and faster -- 24 frames-per-second -- as he turned the sun... in his imagination... on and off -- these the means of young Sergei's eye chewing away at The World.

The means of "Ivan's" make-up are, essentially, a reverse of all earlier procedure: this last work seeks Black and the monumentality of solid shape -- most sequences constructed slowly out of some activity of introductory White:

many sequences begin outdoors in snow scenes --

black dots of moving humanity upon them...

and move to interior darknesses --

white spots of candle-light within them...

In one telling sequence of the film, a huge book, The

Bible, is laid over the face of Ivan seemingly near Death: but, like The Priest of "Potemkin", he is only faking his death to fool the conspirators of his court: the actor, playing Ivan, then opens his eye and visually echoes, with his look, the exact expression of Sergei, playing Priest, two decades earlier: elder Eisenstein, thus, had his "Ivan" accept what young Sergei, as Priest, could not.

Ivan moves, thru the light of this film, along a line of rejections-of-Death -- his mother's... which makes him child-King -- his beloved's... which frees him, from personal life, to assume full powers of Kingship -- to acceptance-of-Death... thru Murder -- himself as Death: "Part 3" would surely have found him/Sergei, and Ivan, coming to terms with his own death at last.

The 'turning point', in Sergei's life, which makes such eventual acceptance possible to him, and his Art of "Ivan", occurred when he made his third film: "Ten Days That Shook The World". This film, made late-1920s, was, after all, the last work Sergei was permitted to create, very much as he wanted, and complete.

It is true that the government censored him here, too, somewhat -- cut his sequences of Trotsky from it, of course ... altered historical fact, thus, to suit the purposes of current propaganda; but they left him essentially free -- free enough to develop his style as never before... and as, ever after, only in the two-thirds of "Ivan The Terrible" he was allowed before the ultimate censorship, his death, interrupted all work.

"Ivan's" "Part 2" was banned, rather than altered -- smuggled, later, out of Kremlin vaults thru East Germany ... finally released 'officially' -- after Stalin's death -- exactly as Sergei had made it: thus, this total ban, on the work, ironically saved it, from censors cuts, and preserved it as the only film of Eisenstein we've inherited unaltered by The Politburo: but "Ten Days That Shook The World" is a close second in this respect, and exists as his least-supervised finished film.



It may seem odd that as politically 'touchy' -a-subject as The October Revolution should have emerged least censored of all Sergei's films: but it must be remembered that Eisenstein was a dedicated Communist Revolutionary -- a student fighter, during the final up-rising... completely inspired by the events he depicts in his film of that historical moment when Kerensky's government was overthrown. For once, in his life, the artist-in-him and the revolutionary man were in accord with each other and both in accordance with official policy: thus "Ten Days That Shook The World" occurs as completed Art because of one of those rare miracles of co-incidence of creative person and policies in agreement -- that same miracle which produced The Renaissance, Elizabethan Theatre, Irish Abbey etc.... a co-incidence which is rare as heaven-on-earth -- is, yet, the only means whereby the art of living men may enter ' the public domain' .

Sergei gave "Ten Days That Shook The World" immortality thus:

any picture-book picture, within it, can combine with any other, or others, to make a replacement for sound -- as when the 'still' image of a soldier and the 'still' of his machine-gun are rapidly intercut to produce the effect of the sound of firing...

and visual sound-effects, thus, become replacements for words -- as when a harp, being strummed, is super-imposed over a speaker's face... the speaker about-to-be interrupted by stomping feet:

therefore images make sentences, thus:

movements, within the frame, replace verbs:

therefore:

pictures of objects replace nouns:

and:

each act of editing, itself, becomes utterly prepositional.

'Still' images, cut together, create contexts -- complexes of thought... ideas -- for instance:

the objects of the imperial office which Kerensky inherits, beginning with dolls and primitive masks, proceeding to tiny statues of Napoleon, and culminating in symbols of king's crown, chess-pieces etc.... spell-out a statement of historical philosophy... :

whereas:

moving images, edited in juxtaposition, cast spell of mood -- make on long visual verb... a choreograph -- thus: the peacock-statue, on the imperial office door, becomes a creature of the assumption-of-power in its spread-of-tail... the act of boasting which Pride engenders; and it becomes symbol of Pride and power-noun, again, only when 'still' -- prideful.

All visual-verbs move as if to become conceptual nouns... as Sergei cuts them -- thus: in the sequence of the Russian dance which unites The Communists and The Cossacks, faster and faster cutting gradually obliterates the movements of dancing and makes, of them, The Dance ... obliterates the gestures of humans uniting and spells, of their swiftly-cut and thus superimposed figures, a singular sense -- Unification.

Perhaps Sergei thought he was making a grammar for Film: he had, he said, worn-out a print of D. W. Griffith's "Intolerance", looking at it hundreds of times, before making "Ten Days That Shook The World": but what he actually achieved was some complete opposite of written grammatical intention, as we experience it in writing. Griffith, film's main grammarian, would have found Sergei hopelessly barbaric: and he was! -- as barbaric as a child...: and he did create his orders-of-image very like those first humans who tried to substitute a picture for a grunt, a track of lines as an approximate of some spoken meaning, a map of signs to stand (not, at first, for places, things, or persons, but) -for the sounds of, say, some chief's intentions -- the map of the 'list' of the things he'd want, from his wars and travels... his thoughts about the history of himself, as collector of possessions -- his map, for afterlife, a signature of



desires accomplished. These 'inventories' were the earliest records in the history of Man -- records of sounds... wishful groans -- grunts of satisfaction... and finally, then, the picturization of Humanity howling: "I want... I want" and the image-lists which signify: "Mine!"... King's -- as Artist's -- immortality only possible thru these symbols which seem to stand-for all that can't, actually, be kept.

The Revolution was over -- just another turn-of-the-wheel -- and moving toward eventual Stalinism... already in 1928... when Sergei Eisenstein celebrated it -- making it triumph, as only it could, in his images... triumph over its own historical Death -- its own October... triumph, as it had, for the period of "Ten Days" that Sergei saw in such a way they would shake The World a little longer than revolution.

He saw them, these "Ten Days" in the most primitive terms known to Man -- the metaphors of Dream; and he created this dream of revolution according to the most primitive processes of imagination... the dream process which makes, of anything, the many-somethings which are, finally, no-one-thing -- or, at least, nothing finally intelligible to the waking man and/or all his systems of thought and orders of communication. The Dream Process is personal: it begins in the womb, before other human being, even twin, is so-much as dreamt-of; and it grows only in accordance with the closed-system of 'the sleeper', even when he is 'daydreaming'; and it feeds on events of the waking world, as if they were all only the results of imagination.

Sergei wrote many texts attempting to create communication-systems of the image-orders in his films, most especially of those in "Ten Days That Shook The World": and, in this contextual writing, he is Grammarion. He had thought he was creating a communal language when making each film; and he was, as surely as a cause can be said to have an effect, doing such as he thought... but only because the world of viewers, and readers too, insisted upon some-such thing out of him: the truth is: "Ten Days That Shook The World" can

only be fully appreciated as a dream -- a most particular dream, dreamed by some unintelligible other human being, in a womb of his own imagination.

He had the Greek Dramatic ideal -- or was it the idea of the Politburo? -- to avoid any images of violence depicting The Revolution... a dreamy Revolution, to be sure -- all Death a suggestion... a nightmare's threat -- utterly abstract. All the explosive violence at end of the film is essentially directed against property. The wounded soldier, seen gesturing his comrades on as he is dying, is too picturesque to be taken as seriously hurt. The end of this dream-impulse, as far as we are permitted to experience it, occurs when, 20 years later, "Ivan" celebrates brutal Murder -- Ivan's 'feast of celebration' being the only scene of color afforded Eisenstein... blood-reds, of dancers, amidst the gold of his splendor -- the colors as garish as, and of the symbolic orders of, remembered Dream: and Ivan says, as his last words in the film, that he/Russia will go on and, as necessary, go on killing... as he and his guests eat the food of slaughter -- some of it served in dishes shaped like animals ... drinking wine as if it were the very blood of the victim -- as totemic-a-scene as ever to be found in any jungle.

For twenty years Sergei moved thru images that were -- in his early films -- like those a dreamer remembers, on waking... images censored by personal conscious thought -- ordered by grammatical attempt -- and thus abstract: toward the last of his life he came -- in "Ivan" -- upon the 'dream-stuff' itself... the primordial urgencies previous to intellect... the primitive King any child is in the womb and for many years after being born -- the very raging monster historical 'Ivan' was born to be, 'at large', as adult human: and Sergei used all his thoughtfulness -- in making the film "Ivan" -- as a tool -- outside the work -- as a camera... to simply present him... a walking nightmare of being human -- being, then, Sergei, too, as he had, before memory, been... a killer beast -- defending himself -- against any and all... in his imagination... that might keep him from

whatever he might want -- might want to be!

It was a heart attack which killed Sergei Eisenstein in 1948. I like to think it was 'his own' -- and not some part of 'the doctor plots' of those postwar Stalin purges... : I like to think he made it, this last struggle with the beast within -- his physiology hemming-in Dream, as it had from the beginning -- himself... exactly as he would have, finally, wanted it -- all thought caught-up in the beat, and at one, with the struggling measures of his physical being.

✓ This is the fourth, and final Lecture, in the first series of The Brakhage Lectures. The first one, on Méliès, appeared in Caterpillar #11; the second, on Griffith, in #13; and the third, on Dreyer, in #14. 7

where two places come together  
 a change  
 is effected      traffic  
 between one place and another  
 is shifted  
 a particular man moving from one place to another  
 a sick man  
 an apostle  
 a propagandist  
 openly a carrier  
 or obscurely  
 a soldier in a garrison  
 a travelling salesman  
 a migrant worker  
 a valet  
 to a millionaire  
 as the image strength rises with the concentration of  
 association  
 which is distinctive in its history or color  
 bestowing a name  
 may be a doorknob as well as a dome  
 may be a tower silhouetted over low rooves  
 flowers  
 against a stone wall a bright surface  
 in a drab street a church among stores  
 that may be the more remarkable for that it has  
 a clarity

of form if in addition it has a richness of texture  
or detail

if it is yellow  
is your door

Los Angeles is a greyish yellow atmosphere

"you cross  
Baldwin Avenue you see all of New York here's that terrific  
drop of land (the Palisades) here is this open panorama of  
lower Jersey City you're going down a hill and there's a  
tunnel there's the Hudson River I always look to the right  
to see if I can see the Statue of Liberty  
then I look up to see the Empire State Building  
see how the weather is  
I have a great feeling of happiness because I'm going some-  
place  
and I love to go places"

you were going somewhere for a  
long time

and when you got there  
there was nothing there  
after all

in the morning  
as on any other morning  
obsessed by the enigma of the means of infection  
yet not thinking consciously of it all the same  
about to cross the threshold of the hospital  
there was a human body lying across the steps  
which stopped me  
though it was an everyday sight  
to see the poor natives attacked by the disease  
delirious and feverish  
almost within reach of the refuge they sought  
falling down

as usual i stepped across the re-  
cumbent figure

and at this point the light dawned on me  
in the hospital a moment later

i knew  
 beyond all shadow of doubt  
 there could be no other solution to the recumbent body  
 the door in front of which it lay  
 which was the barrier  
 that the disease  
 could not pass

a disease that thrives on the coast  
 and travels upwards towards the mountains  
 along the valleys  
 just as the Mediterranean qualities work their way  
 towards the plateau along the routes  
 exposed to the sun  
 so  
 between Herault and Aveyron  
 there is socialism among the railway workers at  
 Severac le Chateau  
 yet I observed the germ in Herault Gard and Lozere  
 with no consequences  
 in the distant time of the Dreyfus Case there were  
 students  
 in the Faculty of Medicine of Montpellier  
 who were infected  
 one Phalippoux  
 went along the valleys of the Basses Cevennes  
 carrying the good word as far as the parishes of  
 Florac  
 where the Protestant tradition declared itself of the  
 left

in virtue of the desert and persecution

"I am a Marxist and I vote on principle for the most advanced  
 side"

but the altitude was unfavorable  
 and the movement  
 came to nothing

there is a threshold for any house  
if a sick man dies at the door

watching the flames on Pingree  
Street  
with Benny Roy and Luedelia  
while Willie and Prince  
were just messin around  
Hamid Audish Yacoub  
who was buying a drugstore  
shot Walter Grzanka  
who came back for

7 cigars 4 packs of pipe tobacco and 9 pairs of shoelaces

while Hattie Garner opened her  
window to let in the air  
Michael Pugh took the garbage out  
and Lucille Brown  
fell down

## vii

what does buffalo have to say to tampa  
what does sandusky have to say to niagara falls  
what does cincinnati have to say to saginaw  
what does newark have to say to detroit  
what does pontiac have to say to phoenix  
what does plainfield have to say to new brunswick  
what does mt. clemens have to say to tucson  
what does elizabeth have to say to wichita  
what does nyack have to say to newburgh  
what does wilmington have to say to rahway  
what does waterbury have to say to new london  
what does elgin have to say to chicago  
what does vallejo have to say to deerfield beach  
what does cambridge have to say to rockford  
what does waterloo have to say to montclair  
what does greensboro have to say to benton harbor  
what does nashville have to say to erie  
what does denver have to say to jackson  
what does massillon have to say to clearwater  
what does columbus have to say to ypsilanti  
what does brooklyn have to say to cairo  
what does waukegan have to say to wyandanch



Stan Persky:

Sat Nov 28 Blake' s Birthday:

### DOMESTIC SCENES

anxiety-rackd as tho some  
uncompleted work demanded my eyes

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#### East-West Dining Room

Took the cloth off the bird cage; the canary, with salmon-orange feathers, yellow ones in the tail, cracks seeds. I heard its churr. Not its bird-cry from parted beak, but its body song. On the table are a gathering of glass salt-and-pepper shakers, with soft tin heads punctured for pouring. They half-hide a dish of butter. Beyond them to the left a jam-jar, the light coming through the bottle so I see a ruby-cave glow. The table objects are turning into figures of the horizon, first characters, the room our universe. In the bottle the glowing ooze. It's only jam when someone comes with toasted bread to cover. Also a silver cup, much dulled, with sugar inside. And beyond, more butter, in another saucer, and a low basket with a few pieces of bread laying quietly obscured behind the bottle and chalice or loving-cup.

The chairs take up various attitudes to the table. Ten of them altogether. A cream-colored one with a bent bow of wood holding the back's beveled spokes, at the lower left, is drawn back under the bird-cage, and the cage's cloth of brown and yellow swirls and dots, lies in its lap. The mate of this one (for there are several couples) is against the mantel near the kitchen door, the white mantel, white wall of kitchen, white door form its space, but not shining whites, rather, dirtied, and chipped, and dust collected in the ledges of the door's panel. Closer, two green chairs are drawn with their chins right up to the table. I lean to my left, putting my hand out, pressing my weight onto the leather seat there. A companion. The uneven legs wobble as I draw back from it.

I do not see this all in order, but my eye moves around the room, the light changes, now the objects in the center darken, surrounded by space of bare board that was groaning board laden with turkey, plum pudding, pies, the whole of the larder in feast a day or two ago remembered, all that we ate too much of laughingly. The knotholes around are like cisterns of the city that has formed there, each item to be lifted, rearranged, when a cloth is laid.

Now

there's a flat purple matchbox that I hadn't noticed, laid a few inches off from the salt-and-pepper towers.

The distrustful creator doubts the doings of his eye who would fall into a disease of objects, it's called, but does he not incline his head toward the saucer edged in a regular pattern of blue spearmint leaves and powder-blue blobs of daisy where he throws his ashes feeling the choked constraint of breath caught in his lungs. It is his own serving dish.

Alas, driven from his kingdom before he could attend

the decorated mantel with its shelves and high balconies that are paced by wisdom books and Chinese jars, or the gongs that over the shutterd hearth - not to speak of this! - his wild eyes askew, and nothing? for the hardy side board where all the dishes and cups reside.

A voice echoes in  
the hall.

No priest of arbor, no traveller with forest guardians may take this body unwillingly from its domestic scenes animated in the morning moved toward breakfast or a gathering of coffee drinkers, smokers, throwers of jests, -what! an old guest arrives from last night to gather his forgotten trenchcoat, but it was raining, how can you forget your raincoat then?

by now Knut bends before the brown metal heater, I feel as surely the house awake as the universal creation, the spray of water or wet light from the faucet into a kettle, the pop of the circulatory warmth, a clanking rhythm, and news from outside, from the tender of electricity and gaseous cooking substance along the Pacific, by phone, that last night's storm darkened hundreds of homes, yet can we say, with one flat lit and the other gloomed, that thus the mystery of the fuses is not resolved, for reason argues that one fuse alone serves both floors, how can it be, and one other rushes in with an appeal to science, a memory of high-school days where he bent his frame over the inky sprawl meant to represent an electrical circuit thus to advance an explanation whereby sense might be made of light and dark whereas I who sit here or put my hand to the heat, eye the bird, and empty my ashes already know it comes from outside.

Hayden Carruth:

August first

Late night on the porch, thinking  
of old poems. Another day's  
work, another evening's,  
done. A large moth, probably  
Catocala, batters the screen,  
but lazily, its strength spent,  
its wings tattered. It perches  
trembling on the sill. Nature,  
the world, what is left of it,  
beyond the screen, is weary.  
Hot dark summer sky without  
moon or stars, air unstirring.  
Darkness is complete. The brook  
sounds low, water fumbling its  
way among stones as if it  
carried troublesome burdens  
to the hopeless sea. And I  
remember a poem I wrote  
years ago when my wife and  
I had been married twenty-  
two days, an exuberant  
poem of love, death, the white  
snow, personal purity. Now  
my confusion takes Rexroth's  
unassertive meter, while  
I look without seeing at  
a geranium on the sill;  
and, still full of day and evening,

of what to do for money,  
I wonder what became of  
purity. The world is a  
complex fatigue. The moth tries  
once more, desperately wavering  
up the screen, beating, insane,  
behind the geranium. It  
is an immense geranium,  
the biggest I've ever seen,  
a stem like a small tree trunk,  
branching so that two thick arms  
rise against the blackness of  
this summer sky, and hold up  
ten blossom clusters, bright bursts  
of color. What is it--coral,  
mallow? Isn't there a color  
called "geranium"? No matter.  
And it's not as if these "bursts"  
were explosive. They are an  
ideal of explosion, force  
without motion, the intent  
without the necessity;  
they are clusters of richness,  
held against the night in quiet  
exultation, five on each branch,  
upraised. I bought it myself  
and gave it to my young wife  
years ago, a little green  
seedling in a plastic cup  
from the supermarket, now  
so thick, leathery-stemmed,  
and bountiful with blossom.  
The moth rests again, clinging.  
All at once I understand  
what my life has become.

Richard Grossinger:      from Book of The Cranberry Islands, Chapter 12, "The Book of Man"

Orange sun, stone moves, in Ojibwa country, breathes, pull up a chair, it's time for us to begin.

Blue sun, in a room, in a library room, reading for the first time of those counterdeities, Rainbow Woman, and Big Fly, Left-Handed Winds, and Spotted Running Winds. The animate is awakened and a flash of colors comes from nowhere. The inner principle is revealed as: color. Everything ages within a system; the world is made of directions. A bear coming from the North is not the same as a bear from the South, is not the same color.

Years later Lévi-Strauss returns to that clear cold blue Ojibwa sky. Quasars bloom like white roses. A rain falls elsewhere in the galaxy. And the Minnesota North Stars appear in a history of the games of the North American Indians. Maple leaf wine and musk-ox stations in the Canadian wilderness, east to the Maritimes, to the blue oyster-grounds of Magdelan. The sky was called ontology then, and in season the great thunderbirds crashed thru the atmosphere, digesting fire and laying their eggs on mountains. Lévi-Strauss is a hunter, Jewish, devious, European, essentially a city boy wound in the streets and the prices of the market. He takes apart the puzzles made of birds and stars and stones; he puts them back together in endless combinations; every door opens; he would seem to have found the origin; but it is a trap. I have the same flaw, and when I succumb to it, in a flash of words and transformational symbols, they call it genius, and it will destroy my work if I let it.

Now I am trying to get to something specific, as the

entry of blue here, the opposite of which is gold, when it comes from a totally new source, even as the name for a direction in Navaho replaced the science fiction planet and grounded it into the visible outward experience. The sand-painting lies in the hydrocarbon chain, with the color blue.

Today in the rising sunlight, on the road to Gorham, a deer hanging from a tree, skinned of all its fur, the corpse within exposed like sensitive photograph plates to fire, but long since overexposed, dead, able to record nothing --- a shudder down along my nerves, collecting at the bottom of a map of all those points hanging there. And blue returns. It is spilling blue paint from the utterly white light of cosmology hanging skinned of its nodes in the gold sun, an inward map, as the deer sees blue, and its body responds to that inner geography, that map of the forest men do not contain as gene or sacrament, joined along the nervous tissue --- SO THAT IT IS the whole forest hanging there to dry, hanging dead from the Frenchman's tree, by a rifle, as the whole world is sewn up in a bundle, left to dry while autumn enters the decanter, and so it comes to an end. The shudder is the energy in which the body feels to a map, and in that map rivers and forests, skies, places within, star-map, visible quasar ground for an instant in a lens made also of light, hangs there stark and exposed, ourselves, the flush, fluid, when it is wet, of points we find our way along. As when the cranes are driven back into the zodiac they take with them the marshland to another planet in, or another Milky Way, and so escape the prospector and his wheat.

Psychosomatic is the name of this vision grounded in equilibrium, meaning that mind and body reach each other as equal at different points in different cultures, hence the living cosmology, the local agriculture, the stratagem of the hunt. The muscles, the blood, the work of the heart, the nerves, and lungs, the code and pitch of this we find on our way thru ethnogeography, when we consult local doctors, eat wildflowers, and become their changed consciousness, and allow the stars back into the zoo. A stone has innate intelligence; a

crystal grows as small animals mate, containing all generations in a perfection, gemlike, growth upon each surface, and from each onto each next around the inner body of the outer husk which is the inner body of the next husk. Grandfather crystal lies with children in family composition; all drink the mothermilk.

You come to tell me what I am, is their reply to the Frenchman, but I don't know what I am. I am living in a fragment village, one migration broken from another. Some of the ancestors are with us. The kitchen is messy, cosmologically I mean, but the sticks are boiling, the radio is playing culture, and a thick pot hangs in the fire. We don't know what we are. We awake and find ourselves in this map, stones move, thunder breathes, birds travel with sounds, stars are among moving stars, stars fall out of the sky, winds are spotted, animals enter a matrix, we lie asleep and flies bring messages, mouth to mouth with that insect, breathing every silent wet sound of his lips with my own lips until it is spoken into me, and I am not there but lie between two women, lips on each other's cunts, making each other, and I am in the invisible, known as body, the desire between them, or the symbol for that which runs in the fields between them. It is a kind of sexual current that makes us all friends, joins us all in theosophical discourse, sit down, pull up a chair, I'm sure you'll find yourself in time, or have something to say.

As man in bands crosses a world-continent toward intelligence, a group of foetal apes picking stones from rivers and flowers from the lips of speech, talking to dead fish in their language, these slow-growing embryos like the seeds of a more ancient Pliocene summer, maturing as children, as children come to fuck, and give birth to children, and change our whole gene pool, and children, man-children, ape-children, sit around the fire growing wise.

We awake without, not knowing where we are, when we do. They offer us maple wine and we drink milk, from Scotland. All about us is darkness, and we are without company in the flashing of sun-stars, of loose roseate flows of energy,



like an itch in which all flesh is fire. The religious imagery is replaced by its source, the mosaic by the inner intelligence of colored stone.

Man in sleep is a bear, wanders on the outskirts of night, transformed into a were-being, or consumed in the Halloween suit into the points he feels. It will be at a terrifying speed we plunge into the galaxy, every speed lost in the absolute, and our coat-tails flying until we reach sense. As the ocean finally upon the beach of light. This is why our conversation this morning is so desperate, as from behind the wet mist and cold dripping radiator of inside warmth the sun comes and finds distance in the world and opens the forest.

In a dream I am told that somehow in my camera I shot the last Hollywood movie of Marilyn Monroe, and now a famous director would like to rescue it and make a full-length film. He is quite upset to find that I have superimposed over her many times, and her image is buried deeply in forest, clouds, and shots of the ocean. He takes it to a special lab where someone will develop it and splice it together with a bona fide script. Now the film will be shown like July 4th fireworks over the Hudson River; the individual shots are taken from the laboratory and held up, still dripping wet in the daylight; a seamstress sews them together with the livers of cows and the inner corpses of deer and eagles. I used an 8 mm. camera, the tiniest windows of film, but they say they have made it into a super-35 mm. film; it looks more like 70 mm., or 140, or more, as the great frames hang with innards in the sunlight, quivering in the processing of energy thru them. Each frame is a masterpiece, a Giotto or Byzantine religious ikon, an Altamira calf or Navaho sand-painting, still alive and hung in the sun for light, or the projector light to pass thru and throw the image on the screen where there is none, simply sky above river, and the city watches.

There she is, light passing thru that brilliant surface of living tapestry, wet and drying herself of light, and suddenly the color fades, and it's merely a social plot, a black and white; the myth-maker is gone from the forest and he has taken with him his golden jaguars and blue eagles; the

thunderbird has been given to rain, and the quasar to starlight. There is no extra unexplained energy for ontology to grow on. All that is left are the script-writers, furiously working in black and white to create a plot, a utopia, as if culture and goddess did not already exist before them. They search for the woman they thought they shot.

It is not that she is on film, or can be developed with the great lens of chemical archaeology. Simply that image after image on 8 mm. film thickens, as in the cortex, grows larger and more complex, as a city: evocation of blonde, of bronze, from copper and tin, gold in the North, in Ecuador and Columbia; she is a goddess born of the materials; the director is complaining as he watches the preview; he finds the camera too shaky; he finds that the sand-paintings are too bulky, masterpieces throwing a light he cannot control as each one is pulled from the water, a giant sheetlike mass of tissue, wriggles like a shark, dances in nakedness while the shaman sings the colors, and all he gets is some forties black and white movie, and she is dressed in a feathered hat, lying on the beach with some actor, talking over innuendo, black and white for all the color that lies behind it.

Now the director is amazed; he thought the lab extracted all my camera work, but there is a zoom down 96th Street into the Hudson River, with the frames getting darker and darker until it is night. I have moved the dial of F-stops, while the trigger of vision was pulled, all the way to the end, trying to get on skin the quality of light as less and less of it touches us. The sand-paintings and innards are moving too rapidly to be seen anymore, the individual landscapes and centuries; it is more like a pulse which generates a steady light, cohering at absolute symbol-deprivation into a black and white film.

The fish swim away, back to ontology, blue is released, a loon is released, stars fly up from the ocean and foam congeals to form the sidewalks of a nation. Marilyn Monroe is just a work, perhaps the two M's, that Mickey Mantle is Joe Dimaggio, and the blue is the Yankee centerfielder, countergold.

The source of materials is a language, a resource, as Navaho categories of water's child, grinding snake, black-blue mountain sheep, red bluejay, crooked red snakes, blue corn, the Ojibwa necromancing, dancing bear, escapes from the great American circus and restores the Canadian forests. A single Indian stands by the projector, throwing the spider web, Lévi-Strauss too wise for all that it is, I am trying to get Christian, rural, alchemical, maritime; we didn't invent bronze; we didn't come with a candle; her body precedes temple of sun and moon; if you cannot imagine another society in this place it will happen anyway, the bell ringing, releasing the loon, and assorted ducks, and here from within the sand-painting we deal another hand, beautiful blue Casco, like some azure being lying naked in the Northern harbor, the young old, seen thru a cheap lens on a revolving turret, those whirling binoculars paid for by a dime, not where the numbers and the chart of sights leads, but directly across the dolphin-back of water into the sun, the flat eternal plane of light, flowing directly back into, sparkles thrown off Casco's back into the precision of a diamond, an invisible boat becomes thru the lens the PORTLAND, fishing, center of world commerce, inside the gem, why America is the most Old World nation today, and the New World begins back upon, as New World monkeys in the streets of Ireland and Japan. The dime gives one minute of vision; the energy contained in its jewel is too much and threatens to burst, to release the absolute fix of light; image lies on all sides and we in the center of a circle we are blind to until we take our eyes away: Casco blue as on anyday, I remember the first sand-painting, and that was the beginning of cosmology for me, from which the blue water flowed like blood.

Thomas Meyer:

ISIS' MEMORY

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Traces of The Great Herbal of Horus

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I had sight offered me in crystallo & I saw  
John Dee, 25 May 1581

.

Tender nibs of  
soft beans &  
peas in  
their cod

leaf & root found,  
the tits of  
Isis,  
hid, dark in  
catkins, acorns, walnut, almond  
quincunx secret.

Her burdens trace the veils,  
pelts for tygers' eyes

Here the weight of his arm is a dark stranger.  
Here his shin is a quarrel, a cold hearth &  
his hand bending her back is an angel in disguise.

To center the universe  
in a single night's brief dream

.

It is one thing to keep track, record the days & nights, taking comfort from such an aimless task. But still another to draw from that record a thread which is not spun from the series of events & dreams set down, a thread made up of what is lost to habit, forgotten each night before sleep & each morning before rising. What seemed aimless before, sketchy & of no use becomes the pledge. To go forth & achieve the next station, a certain devotion must be held & holding it a responsibility is assumed, more clearly: consumed. This thread nets the heart.

At first the diary of day &/or dream does no more than record, but in its persistence & dullness it instills the keeper with a certain & previously unknown link to matter or hyle. These elements, fundamental matters, are oddly enough not part of personal perception; they come upon us unawares. They are sought indirectly by the heart.

.

Ears, thoughts, words & the day echoes

.

& the air' s hum

shines

vibrant

aglow,

helios, the beck dries up

& the river stones

bone dry heaps

rippling

of the atmosphere, gull wings

above low water --

shallow obscure surface

yet the gull' s eye spots the fish.

I observe this

not closely, casually, not for augury, a half-sight

until now as

a god shapes up in this hindsight, wings form

the rime.

The image hums:

Lovely god, beloved bird

holy flight, here above

stillness in the heat

stir the fish from dark in-

to structure' s light &

skim the surface of vision.

The thyme is brought out from the kitchen into the sun dry,

& the day' s heat tints the sky rose

waiting for rain

Dressed in wizard robes  
     Thunder's lord goes to town,  
     Thunder's lord kicks up the dust.  
 Called by it he calls it,  
         his cells flash anticipation,  
 a certain sense he alone has stirs  
         inside his heart.  
 The invisible light, on clouds' edge  
         shakes his arms & legs.  
 "He has learned to read his own symptoms"  
         to be its Word  
 in this manifest  
 in his acute magic  
         internal rime, vision in vision  
 Aware, he rises before the rest  
                                 (nostrils & throat alive)  
 what isn't there yet filling the mind.  
         In the lunge of the gull  
 right before the rain  
 a god-light shimmers, a shape.

Spirit, thought  
     full, right  
 comes thru the eyes  
     free & nimble



Tis hot & dry  
 It forces the Courses & Urine  
 Tis Cephalick, Uterine & Stomatick.  
 Tis good for Spitting of Blood & Convulsions & for Gripes.  
 it cures & disposes to Sleep

.

Turn of furrow, tufts & the plough,  
 Iron dips into earth  
 grass, clod under clod,  
 line traced by furrow  
 Green in the dark stretches of rock wall  
 set out by boundries  
 The land netted with stones

.

I stayed home  
 & read the dates & details of an old man's life  
 moved from room to room with book & cigarettes. How  
 the chronology absorbed me, event, movement, how  
 it ran along my own day, as much a part as  
 this glass of ice & bitter brown carpane, a bright  
 thin bit of lemon

.

anima, intellect  
     complete & ordered,  
 moves in on the eyes  
 open & quick

.

& it was the occasional week-ender with ice cream  
 or a quick rattle of gravel outside the window --  
 not much more than flies or sunlight on the hedge  
 broke the sway my heart held to.  
 Such a tender, simple notion took me in arms,  
     set me down

.

So a world of dreams takes shape  
     from the mind of images  
 & the soul of all things takes thought  
     out of the centers they sleep within,  
 Anima -- perceptual,  
     still, asleep  
 So these things' souls take up my heart  
     & tremble now  
         like a lapwing,  
     royal, crowned  
 As Isis hid her child aided by the bird  
                     Pliny mentions  
 & the sun's soul stirring again in all things

The branches come out of the ground in great numbers,  
growing to the height of sixe foote, garnished with brave  
flowers of great beautie, consisting of fower leaves in a  
piece, of an orient purple colour. The cod is long & full  
of downie matter, which flieth away with the winde when  
the cod is opened.

L' anima, l' intelletto  
intero e sano  
per gli occhi ascende  
piu libero e sciolto

Thought stops yet the image persists  
Day twists till the day's form  
takes me  
& interrupts none of this joy  
only to increase, complete the shape.  
Mind rests wherein the heart dwells

Rosebay willow-herb  
nimble, free in the eye

The air in August now, windy night  
tall stalks bent

Where in this hollow, lidless silence  
does the howl begin, the shutter?

St John' s wort caught in my sight

Magic & botany,  
 & star-craft, sleepless ones,  
 The Watchers taught  
                         their wives, men's daughters  
 to make swords, to make-up their faces.

Wisdom from above, god-seed spent  
from above

From this the lore grows, sprouts,  
                    day & her labors  
We got secrets: Cattle, then field  
                    sky sleeps on ground  
inside the turnings  
                    warm intimacies

Mystery, earth & her axis,  
soil clings to its pivot, spins

above the blackthorn hedges,  
along the shadows  
down to the river  
the lapwings hum, circling,  
light near a red cow.

A flap in the wild grass,  
a young rook with blue eyes.

## Fledgling & the racket in the rookery branches

My broken utterance  
     my mouth, my trembling word  
 What speech, my anima mundi,  
     how spoken as you speak it  
         when I open to you in a tongue trill  
 swallowing you

Where my foot falls ajuga grows  
                                    & wild garlic  
       & the words swell with May's signature

Or did it spring forth just so,  
bright as Hestia's hearth,  
hot, true?  
Home's dame, lights of the prytaneum,  
dark melts in air around you

.

The net of fragments half-begun.

Still the image delivers this chaos  
 even if bits & phrases imitate my loves.  
 No, I loose nothing to homage,  
                                     but begin made anew

sure enough, I am new  
                                     though my voice answers, repeats

.

The sun & the wind  
                     the smell, estragon, of another country  
 & the field  
                                     spread with shit

.

O mouse, keep this grainary  
 now rhubarb shades rocks in the garth  
 summer lays down  
                                     on the fells

O mouse, keep this greenery  
 each of the rusted seeds

This creature sacred to sunlight

swifter than the arrows of his master

gray, long-tailed

provident & curious familiar

.

Soul, reason,  
     inbetween yet set,  
 rises in the eyes  
 spacious but perceived

.

Fairies, weasels, rats & ferrets  
 or seven fat geese in a field  
     hissing, brown & white,  
 their eyes follow me, turn,  
     beaks ruffle grass, feathers --  
 the sun, the road I walk on slope.

Heifers, wary sheep my familiars;  
 to take vision from animal gazing  
     through a door underground.  
 The very devil dazzles such glances,  
     all motion stops in these tracks.

The Eternal City's heart  
     as common as dirt.

Not man, but his image.

.

As his hint & trace air out sun-lit places,  
his torso of terror on terrace & lawn  
spins up musics in dusty places  
from whirl of wings or fumbling of fawn;  
& his wierd wild lightning eye quivering  
in clean gardens is unnerving.  
The well chosen words, conversation' s paces,  
all heartless babble, stop & are gone.

.

In the middle of the road  
I startled a red ring  
of fox cubs attacking  
a black cat.

They broke away,  
hid in the thickets.  
Should I kill the cat  
out of mercy or  
let the cubs return  
& leave fate interrupted  
but not disturbed.

.







Demeter manifest in this, Triptolemus  
knew her by sight.  
The dogs still bark, never know us,  
the calves expect food  
yet we come this way every morning;  
nothing changes  
but the rose hips are riper  
& the cow parsley taller, thicker stalked,  
the light later  
on Helm Knott.

hiera brought forth,  
 a hedgehog blinded by the car lights,  
 red-eyed & slow.  
 deiknymena, things revealed

barley water with mint,  
Iambe's dirty joke

Waybread's broad, green leaves push up  
even through the asphalt on the drive.  
There's a lust in this greenness  
                something that overcomes,  
the strong gives birth to the strong,  
made a eunuch by hemlock  
                                    not like Attis,  
the priest cries,  
what is born of spirit  
                has a strength beyond flesh.

Mother of Corn, Anger, another of your names,  
     your sorrow, our mercy,  
 bears the baby on the fan, Brimus, Iacchus --  
 & we, come from the sea, having bathed the pig,  
     in light seek the dark

.

Poetry is that Art, that branch of magic & kabbalistic root that celebrates presence or simply there. Pointed to, referred to & indicated away from the speaker, other than, in that language remains the initial phenomenon of the poet. Poetry begins in the, that quick almost silent signal of presence.

By "begins" I mean something like the moment before the silence is broken. The Hebrews began their alphabet with a letter in which we see the mystery of the open throat & poised tongue, it had no sound & was voiceless yet represented the phenomenon of utterance. & the most astonishing fact on which poetry thrives is that every sentence (or projected unit of utterance) once begun CAN stop, not complete itself & begin again as a new sentence related or unrelated to its own initial impulse or sound. No where else in the cosmos is this aspect of will & magic so clearly & precisely manifest.

Poetry celebrates not only presence but the multiplicity of presence & the infinite possibilities of there. The poem has the power of location, it is a place -- an actual (not metaphorical!) spacial event of language which begins in the mouth & lungs & moves outward into time, the mind, the body. There it starts, flirts, catches the imagination with abstraction & the ear with concrete patterns, shifts & comes back changing the abstract into the concrete &

.

Eleusis,  
advent

.

If a man's feet swell on a journey, take this wort;  
pound with vinegar, then bathe the feet with it &  
smear them. Soon they will grow smaller.

Frank Samperi:            from INTAGLIO

I lived daily the spiritual  
my meals taken alone  
the reality false  
the position  
never ubiquitous  
went to a coffee shop  
the discussions  
war  
city  
one said  
war national  
the other  
city familial  
both  
therefore  
nation  
home  
complement  
other talk  
folk singers approximate realities better  
we are at the beginnings again  
then the position of onlooker  
uninvolved  
not choice but birth  
the language becoming less visional  
yet at a certain level  
whatever the word  
the total vision reflective  
then going on  
reason  
a loss  
the spirit cut off

Spirit seeking the spirit  
in grass love  
light going

Remembering not discovering  
if eternal  
then body  
glorified  
mind  
giving out  
necessary  
where body  
given up  
the suffering  
an argument  
the man descending  
forgetting fall  
investigating path  
progressing  
ascending  
infinite straight line  
returning  
past eulogistic  
end  
future  
dome  
control  
eradicating  
present  
mind  
soul  
body

entangled  
in water  
the pain  
requiring light  
blanching the eyes  
informed  
informing home

Turning  
away  
from  
water  
looking  
toward  
moon  
evil  
inhering  
trees  
homes  
everything  
beyond  
then  
near  
dawn  
a  
conversation  
a  
minute  
two  
\$20  
too  
much



the  
prostitute  
unconcerned  
the  
doorway  
a  
frame  
the  
hotel  
lobby  
empty

The future then and a death  
arrived late  
somewhere  
near midnight  
took the only rooms available  
the horizon  
sea  
light as far as the door  
the  
shade  
less  
than  
half  
way  
drawn  
startled  
went to the window  
a  
group  
of

people  
up  
from  
the  
beach  
outside  
the  
bar  
across  
the  
street  
turned away  
the painting above the bed  
a storm  
ship going under

sun or shade our talk  
by river

lying about naked  
morning intercourse

the aura

George Stanley:

## SUICIDE

Last night we were sitting in the bar. Stan said, "Couldn't we do something more cheerful? I mean, it seems like it's a down feeling to be sitting here, couldn't we use our intelligence and figure out something that would be more cheerful?" We had been talking about suicide, a philosophical and historical question. We were not loving each other. We were sitting around the table, the brown, heavy, formica-topped table that resembles stained wood up against the wall and across from the bar, at Gino & Carlo's, in an alcove where there had once been three wooden booths, next to the jukebox, under a light fixture set into the low ceiling but with the glass knocked out of it, so that the bare fluorescent tube showed, and was usually off. Hardly anybody was in the bar. Nobody was playing pool. One soft-faced, frustrated-looking guy, might have been a salesman, his work wasn't physical obviously, he had a coat on, kept going to the jukebox and punching a couple of songs (and I heard Scott's laughter behind me once when I was at the bar and this guy was saying, Janis Joplin. Yeah, Scott said, and laughed--I thought, what is he trying to do, ingratiate this guy? I had picked up the vibes: we had something he wanted, envied, hated, and when I sat down then a little later he came up to the juke, put in half a buck, punched a couple of buttons, maybe just at random, and turned to us and said, You wan'ta play the rest? and I, too, taking a second to figure it out, I knew no wasn't the answer; it was yes, so I too smiled and said yes. I got up and played the music. That was about all that was going on. We

sat there and drank our beer--and I drank my Jack Daniels --and I am led off again, well, here I go, master, blue ribbon, baby blue satin ribbon around my neck, I am looking for love, you lead me. When I typed "Jack Daniels" then I got a flash of myself on some stage; well, why not name it, Buchanan one oh something at UBC, reading this, and a wave of appreciation, a wave of love came back to me from the kids. For Jack Daniels. For what? For honesty? For drinking good whiskey? Is it self-appreciation, for their having picked me out? Liked me? Told their buddies--god, how do they talk about poetry, what do they say it does for them? Do they want to be shocked? By homosexuality, by whiskey? I don't want to leave you there, Stan, Brian, Scott, and Sara, at the table at Gino's, I wanted to get into that feeling of not loving you, of our not loving each other. And am.

Woke up yesterday to cook breakfast for six people--went to the zoo then, with three, and had dinner with thirteen--and then I wanted to go off for an hour or so and be by myself, and I felt kind of apologetic to say this, their eyes, especially Scott's accused me. My wanting to be by myself felt not as criticism, no, why, then, I could stay there and criticize. Encounter. No, it was deeper than that, it was bearing on the edge of something, hinting at--the other side of our affection for each other is a feeling of being trapped, or kept at arm's length, by each of us, a guard for each other. Why can't I fall down deep into your being, Brian, now why not, like into hay, into water? Keep off, let me be, at the shining eyes either side the mastiffs growl. That's what they said then--did Sara? I let her off easy, if it had been Stan I would have blew my cool, I was that frustrated by having come back to them. I did go off for an hour but just went to City Lights, Discovery, Spec's --could I have had an adventure? When I left East-West House Stan looked at me knowingly and said, I guess we won't see you at all again tonight, so he knew, he was hinting at the same thing, we want to be alone, unknown, we

want to fuck our way in deep, there is no joy like joy with a stranger. The first person I saw was an about 35-year-old Chinese who looked at me that way, startling me out of my thought just that, meeting a boy, a man (this is getting sticky, and it oughtn't be--but I had nowhere to go. (The image of one of those dirty stone apartment buildings on Geary, depraved, I called them to Brian a day before, there, is where it would end. But I looked into the Chinese's eyes and said, not you. I don't know if he heard. He crossed Sutter St. ahead of me his ass in blue jeans a little rhythmic, just a bit. But I had forgotten him soon as I got over that second I thought he read my mind. I had given it up by then. Went to Spec's and had a Bohemia and read the Berkeley Barb. Nixon will have to side with England and then 40 million American Irish will join the Movement. I went to Gino's. And what Sara, I'm sure it was Sara, said, is, you're so controlled.

There was one moment of love that night. Chuck, a tall, gangly, kind of student type black who comes into Gino's a lot and gets very nicely, not belligerent or show-off drunk, but just woozy, he comes over and asks me to go to the bar with him a minute and then he shows me the stub of his paycheck, Charles Baldwin. I didn't know your name was Baldwin, I say, cause I remember another guy who drinks in there named Baldwin and once half-hearing somebody distinguish in telling a story between two Baldwins when I only knew one I think at that time I wondered maybe who the other was. But in a sense to a Negro from a white that means I didn't know you had a last name. But it was not taken that way. Chuck hit me for five bucks, and my first reaction was to offer him two, but then with no control, just a kind of sensing the whole mood, the vibes, feelings like--that's chintzy, 5 isn't so much, I like him, what if I didn't get it back, mixed, I got a kapoltish: Frank, can you give me two fives for a ten? And then some mumblings about when he was gonna pay it back and I'm saying sure and grasp his arm and back down at the table, facing

the wall and the conversation about suicide. Moral and philosophical. After Sara said that about control I had another Jack Daniels even tho I knew everybody was ready to go; I don't know if I meant that as an example of my control or the opposite. But I'm only so controlled when I'm in control. When I'm out of control...

When I'm out of control I love you. When I'm out of control I do slide down into your being like into warm air, bread, touch, no questions, head turns easily, there is--  
April's warm face, and everything I lay on her of me is gone, I see her, she is another person, and I can lay my hands on her, that is taken as warm, loving, good i.e., it feels good. This happened last week when I was cooking and Lee turned me on. Brian peeled the peaches for me and people kept coming into the kitchen, the smells, the touches, the vibes, the sounds (tones, timbres of the voices were fine, there was too much going on for me to get it all, to be in control, especially the words. Suddenly Stan and Brian were saying goodbye, not gonna be back for a few hours, till dinner. That's OK. OK if Lee leaves too, if I'm just left here with the food I'm cutting, sautéing, baking, steaming, stirring, it's for them and me. OK if they stay too. They'll be back. OK if I die?

I can't get into sadistic fantasies anymore. I can't get them going. Oh, I thought once that if I could only be free of that (once i.e., 2 years ago. Fucking keys on this typewriter sticking, causing me unnecessary flashes of reflectiveness as I disengage them but take it anyway. I follow you down all your roads. I thought if I could be free of fantasy of all kinds, but especially that kind, that malevolent, scary seduction (and why I can't now? Because, like this morning, in the tub, the two boys I had (the details never got fixed, but somewhere around my car, hitchhikers, they looked at me with such astonishment at what I was going to do to them, and I hadn't even figured it out yet, that I had to stop. I couldn't go on with that. I had to draw back from the whole situation and just stay in my tub at the East-West

House. I couldn't have them looking at me like that. Nice young hippies. So that's the way it goes. But I thought I'd feel so great, so much better, and larger, and sometimes I do (like more and more now when stoned) but mostly I feel the same, empty, dulled (not dull-minded but dull of feeling, turned-off-- and is it the mastiffs at the corners of all our eyes? Cerberus? And not even having the richness and feeling of the flesh in bondage, pulling, pushing against bondage and so feeling itself, because bound, its own beauty, anticipating pain, as a refuge. Can't go there cause those boys with their wide eyes.

Love, be a stranger to me. Come on me unexpecting. Don't know my name is George Stanley, I'm a poet, I'm in control.

Bruce McClelland:

UNCERTAIN SONG [for Deborah]

Un-  
       bestimmt-  
                   heit:  
 where you are,  
 going at the  
 (given)  
                   time, the  
 given moment  
augenblick, the shutter  
clicks, the  
 eye opend.  
                   a velocity I  
 cannot record,  
                   recall  
 (only the direction, if we are  
 given directions)  
 (you move against the  
 night, with  
 the night,  
 where you are, &  
 how I wonder,  
 how I wonder.  
                   lines of the  
 body, the body's  
 wave, the  
 wave moves in  
 time, eine



Unbestimmtheit: a motion for &  
against

what I would  
wish, I wish a place  
to close my  
eyes, find my  
way.

Edward Dorn:

from THE DAY REPORT

New Year' s Day

Margaret O' Hare to Mexico

Day 5, 360 days follow

Kid at the clinic 1:00p

Day 16

Neil Young. Auditorium Theatre

This ruptured disk is  
the voice of an  
Angel

**Day 19 Tuesday**

**H. Bialy at the workshop**

**PP 207-208, The Discovery**

Day 26+339

space in am. hem.  
           indiscriminate  
 always referenced ie nonvirgin

geo	
gra	Slate
phy	Chalk

whereupon we wrote ourselves silly

hi	
story	europ a jelly roll a trip inside

the enclosure of the land  
           leads directly to  
 the enclosure of the mind

Day 30

Georgia O' Keef

Ultra blue line

2:pm

Day 55, 310 days follow

Ash Wednesday

O, the answer lies within

The answer lies within?

O extremely far out      /extra eemly  
that's the first place most folks have been  
and I can only guess what it's about  
but it sure is  
the first time I ever heard of a cop-in!



Day 57

of Aries  
the celestial traveler, vision most distant  
Capricorn women  
Capricorn men and women  
trying the works ahead of time  
the anxiousness of the beginning of the sun  
straining the strings of Aries  
the celestial traveler where Earth maybe  
no longer home

(so here comes this sheepdip around the corner  
(destined to sell his Self

March 1

Whiterabbit!

Night 65, 300 nights to come

The Garrick Ohlsson program of March 5th 1971 began at 7:45 with a trip on the el. A moist warm evening. We sat on the platform over the Parkway and made some smoke. Jennifer whispered isnt it strange how much this looks like a turkish cigarette? I think we should smoke it like a cigarette. The train arrived and opened its doors. As the car jogged along we were held on a vision which lay between the shining rails and which prostrated itself before a nearby infinity to be called Chopin. Like chunks stuck together. I mean it was really grotesque.

We reached the Auditorium Theatre at 8:15 and quickly moved into the lobby. Sat down on a stone bench by the stairs, had some tobacco and a paper cup of orange juice. Then up to section FF. The Steinway stood brute silent on the stage, mouth propped open with a wooden stake. The boy comes in with an old fashioned beard on.

The first number is Soneto 104 del Petrarca with one bow and then Sonata in F minor, Opus 5 with some premature coughing and applause between the Andante and the Scherzo and some mistaken applause between the Scherzo and the Intermezzo, followed by two bows. Mr. Ohlssons exercise not surprisingly laid the foundation of the following comparative: Liszt has a head heavier than Brahms.

During the intermission we line up with 35 ladies from Miami who are shouting "The music is Everything" and ten minutes later we arrive at a niche in the wall which turns out to be the house of a skinny arc of water.

The first number this time is the Triptych of Louis Weingarden. The composer was drunk when his allegory seized him. The virtuoso does what he can, but it is a house-piece. A few rows down a group of college music teachers pass a folded sheet of paper between them which evidently has a joke written on it. A 12 year old boy sitting across the aisle is asked to leave by the listeners in his

territory and he climbs the stairs with his head in his hands outstretched before him.

And now it is time for Chopin! Nocturne in E-flat Major, Opus 55, No. 2 is dressed pretty but soon humdrum. Scherzo in E Major, Opus 54's a bitch. Polonaise in F-sharp Minor, Opus 44 begins with the zest of a Russian and ends with the solidity of a Pole. Just the right truck to bring around for the move home. And we chant moving through the lobby and the encore Goodbye Garrick, Goodbye.

Day 67--298 to come

A working day. Monday is a day I value. Since it is a prehistoric day it is impersonal and free. I woke up from night 66-67 with a pleasant emptiness. I had gone to sleep reading Ramparts. My dreams had been primary, summary, and off-hand. And I felt a redeeming, but vague, satisfaction as my eyes opened to a bright sharply outlined new day. I have been over-ridden by my mind: they were on-hand the night before. 65-66.

I rose and walked into my son's room. He was sitting on the floor behind the door with two blocks in his hand one red and one blue. We smiled and then sat down to his piano which was made like desperately in Taiwan. We played several little tunes celebrating Chinese Women.

After his diaper was changed we descended to the kitchen where we ate cornflakes and as he made some practice sounds I spoke some pure American.

I spent the morning and early afternoon getting ready for my Hour. At 3:30 I departed for my Hour in a red convertible.

Entered Pl at precisely 4:03. On the way to work I heard Van Morrison and a piece of stupifying news about the Board of Trade. I call once more for the late papers and then begin the first 45 minutes of extraction. The gold comes away from the silver with no great coaxing. The next few minutes will be easy, in fact, the point now is--whats this about. They like the formality the intimacy, like letters they say. Like he's writing a letter. I put that up like a kite which reads too easy too low too cheap. If he talks to "someone" why is not that someone you. If he

knows what you say you can hear, then how is it not produced particularly for your ear? The thot is too complicated. And so am I.

We have several poems from Autumn in New York.  
 "Cold comes creeping in the window  
 And in the sky searchlights sweep"

We have a common puzzlement, as if we were reminded of something.

"In the garden of earthly delight  
 he laid his limbs down beside a yew tree  
 and surrendered his eyes to the brilliance of brass"

I am the poet. This is the day report.  
 Ace of Penticles is the assignment. Boston, 1934.  
 In 45 minutes extracting time this shit comes off  
 the page equal, say, to the GNP for 1964. Of course  
 it is worth far more now. That's not bad. Forty five  
 minutes is not even a full workday.

I dismiss the people. Let a rider out at Belmont.  
 When I slam the door to the garage a signal from my  
 group in S.W. Colorado relays over my cellfields.  
 I pull the switches. My sister's wife has a lover  
 named Ed. I must speak to my son immediately.

Day 72, 293 coming Saturday overtime

Stumpnote to Alexander Hamilton

The mechanical man stood beside a special machine. Two wheels. Two vertical pipes. Hanging in the frame a rotor with teeth powered by the truck in front. The whole thing shook and stomped with woodlust. The blurred rotor ate an inch at a swath and then jumped over, automatically. It was soon done and the chips were impacted in the hole. The little spitz of a frowning woman attacked the spot with one last stream of piss. I wish I had thought of that. Now Alexander Hamilton the thing what makes you go has removed the final evidence of another one of our great friends.

(west diversey information service

73rd day

My mother took the Kid south today. He smiled  
and wanted something to say like goo ga lay



## The evening of Day 74

Andrew Jackson

On the evening of the fifteenth J., M., & E. were invited to a screening at the Esquire Theater in the Russian Oak District by Mick. They quite happily consented and as the Kid was sojourning in East Central Illinois under the watchful eye of his Grandmother they had no need of Mrs Lonius the baby sitter who was on the set at the Biograph and saw it all happen that night with The Lady in Red. They departed straightaway. As they stepped into Diversey Mick told them he had just come from Frisco where he interviewed T. V. Did you see any crowds in Frisco? M. asked. Oh yes, Mick said, there was one at the Ultimate Race Track but it was Nothin compared to this movie we made.

76 + 289  
St. Ps Day

We could have seen on video  
Everything we heard on radio  
Except the faces

Day 77 Thursday 18 March

This morning Night presented her final  
idea to me and I opened my eyes. Driving Snowe.  
I began to realize a poem from my sleep called

### Parmenides in Magpieform

He poked his head  
and walked around  
while he said there is  
nothing I have said  
and Nothing  
I have said is black & white  
Why are you in drag  
he read behind my blind  
This dress as you can see  
he answered me  
was put on  
for the party in your mind  
and true to my philosophy  
I am the last to go  
Good Light

And then he handed me  
the menu inside a chinese utility warp

Boiled Fishing Pole on a bed of Fried Ironing  
Bload

Day 79, 286 days follow

Dreamtrack: I woke up riding away from robbing  
The Big Dipper Bank in Cheyanne Wy-  
oming

- - - - -

"Our Sun is moving about 12 miles  
per second  
towards the constellation Hercules  
That's our direction," the poet  
announced.

Groovy the Slinger nodded  
Wake me up when we get there

# FIRST SERIES SOME POETS

AUDEN CREELEY DORN DUNCAN  
McCLURE OLSON WIENERS  
FELDMAN McDIARMID REXROTH

R.B.KITAJ



Auden

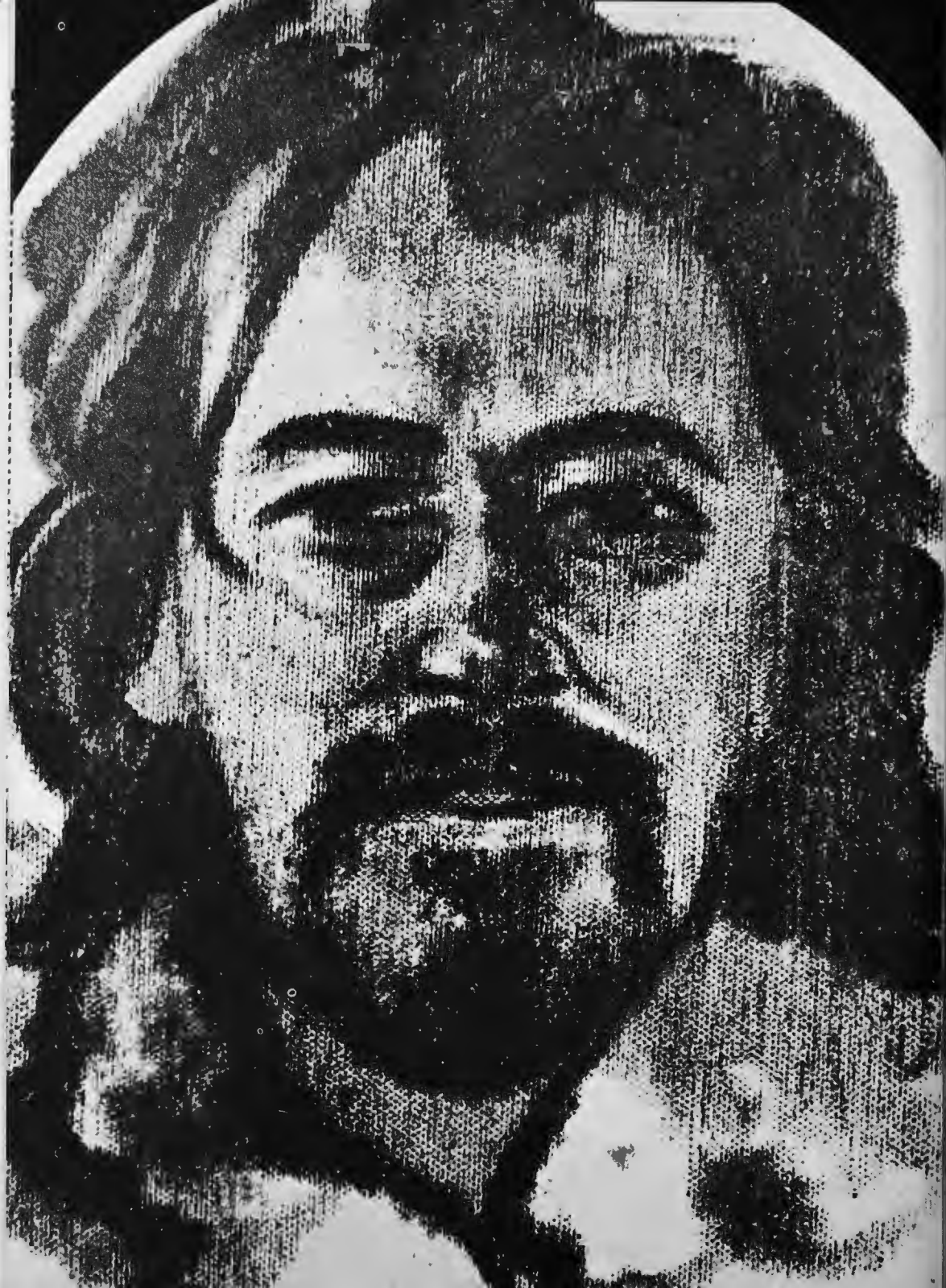
























Fielding Dawson:

## UNION PACIFIC

'Impossible!' he cried.

'Not at all,' I smiled, 'and, in fact, if you'd check closer check his behaviour, you'd see he's as fruity as a - '

'I can't listen,' he said.

'O.K.,' I said, and I gestured to Graves, the bartender, 'we'll have two - '

'No no,' the man said,

Thackeray, in Henry Esmond, has a description of a woman, 'lean and yellow and long of the tooth,' and as this businessman objected, I saw a sort of froth drop off one of his eye teeth,

'it's on me.'

'Hear that?' I asked Graves.

'I heard it,' Graves said, and he made the drinks and the businessman beside me paid. And turned to me, put his hand on my arm, smiled, and asked me where I had heard that? and I said I hadn't heard it (I had), I knew it (I did), most everyone knew it, that he was bored and rich and in love with men, and this long of the tooth businessman scowled, and whispered simply impossible.

I know, he murmured, for a fact, it isn't true. Can't be.

I sighed, yeah, he uses his marriage for cover, and I said, look, everybody, even those who don't, do, and those that won't only don't, and those who could would if they had a chance and it works the same with women, and I looked this fella in the eye and said think back, be honest



with yourself, and I put my hand on his and his hand was on my wrist and he made a scarlet little leer and chuckled, in his pin stripe suit, well, he laughed, if you can't take the New York Central, go Pennsylvania, right?

We roared with laughter - holding hands.

Larry Eigner:

(5 poems

#186

so the fine green arm

of the phone truck

the line-men birds, they

might ride to the trees

that

cross-piece now is precise

it takes two

the fresh pole there  
for days

plenty of oil share  
what

bright yellow

over the tires

up north and east

can make a sound  
when did we turn the lights  
them carried too  
O it is, huh  
and nothing can bring it back

#431

one light on  
like the cars headlights  
the fumes stairway  
the door  
open and  
that window  
who's to get there up  
after such stops use  
worked off  
what's a start  
made gone by

punishment    tires

a furniture truck

put away

nights

what clouds

whisper

moisten

#455

the only world we' ve got

the leaves

the glass

the sky

reflections

the moon comes

trees hold

yellow

#456

home

fires

burn

walls

meet

stars

naked

cloud

shifting

such sky

all through

the apple

branches

what distance

shades

light

#463

the phonepole line the floorlamp ticks

clair de lune  
as the clock

various curved coastwise  
order stretch  
in mind

as how little water  
memory, can make a flat  
glint it passes  
out and in shade

a hitch

gets brighter and brighter

load in transmission

musical steps

the whole time

different  
miles

as repeat selves

or nothing to imagine far  
beyond the nodes  
struck

brightness, measure. soft

niagara keeping

the flow  
of its fallen mass

Robert Kelly

INJUNE

In June was a jar had  
honey in it. Honey in its  
head. Had.

The beacons came to play on  
it. Publican weather.

I tell the history of a  
conspicuous jar, one long

derangement

like a song through a door  
a door ajar.

Door had.  
Hardly opened.  
When.

The honey in the jar would be a  
history of our tribe, until  
a young man got the honey  
in his head.

The beacon was a star  
beckoned. Crystals  
in the old sleepy forest.

What do we know.

First gist of honey :  
June was the way in.

Cancer (sign)



Life in its shell.

We know  
 the glib  
 of mountaineers,  
 got goitre  
 but not  
 when they lived by the shore  
 so  
 man must be littoral.  
     (a parenthesis)

June was this jar  
 or how life began.

Breakfast was clotted milk  
 because the stars.

As we ate  
 the bread was baking in the earth.  
 The hearth was never far.

Fire was never hard.  
 We cared.  
 This was the way in,  
 cool look of a June morning  
 I remember in July.

Milk & honey.  
 The jar was heaven,  
 broke & poured down.  
 Man's life is spilled milk.

A boy saving rain.

The stars were jars, were doors  
 & we keep looking back,  
 angel at the fiery gate,  
 boy, delivery boy, looking  
 down at the smashed quart.

This angel is this boy.

The doors are open all night long,  
that's where the cool wind comes  
that blows the honey into our heads,  
is sleep.  
Crust of vision on the new-woke eyes.  
Sleep in my eyes.

What happened to the head,  
the head's on straight, the Lion  
we see in the stars  
reminds us of our own,

the girl was lovely but inexperienced,  
slipped,  
they both got honey in the head.

But hers was heavier  
& remembered earth  
& all the caves  
filled up with jewels, & gold  
ran down into the ground to hide,  
to be  
the secret content of her  
honey thought,  
her heavy head  
thinking grapes on to the vine

(wild  
taste of the bitten apple!)

She slipped. His lion  
slipped out, his lighter head  
sticky with honey  
stuck to the sky.

It was June. We were born.

The gate her kindly inefficiency,  
his eager lion

running  
to bask in her.

Now all this is legend  
(not myth, not a miss  
to make up an earlier mile)  
& the jar  
is the milecastles on Hadrian's wall.  
Is the grass I havent planted  
the broken lawn & the promises  
that ooze like honey  
from the hive of whys,  
    six-sided chambers  
filled with infant questions  
    growing to serve  
by endless labor  
    the search of the hive:

Once this queen was woman,  
    was the sun  
& all their humming was for her  
& what she turned them towards,  
    rational answers  
to the needs of every day,  
    how a man can live  
without breaking the jar  
    & still  
walk back between the stars  
perfect as they are, & long-lived.

\*\*\*

*A chapter of precisions,*

needed to go further :

The primal component of legend is  
fact.

The primal component of myth is  
desire.

The fact of desire is  
how we got this way.

*Meaning* is the end of any process.  
It draws. Drags.

We can enrich the process.

Smelt. Refine. Decline. Consume.

The gold  
hides in the ground

the way tomorrow's weather  
hides in the air,

the way what I will finally know  
hides in me now.

\*\*\*

*Injune* is a verb, the way a word  
makes flesh, is begotten not  
created.

Injune is our coming to this place.

On the Mayflower  
we came to June.

The gates of Cancer  
aim us at the moon.

We act as if we came here to injune.

(Injune yourself!  
it's wetter than you think.

The Queens of Oil  
are melancholy,

the Kings of Honey  
have captured them,

shot into their hives  
a curious message

shaped like themselves.  
Their joys arrive

& set fire to the ocean.  
The prince of fire

is the last to come.)

\*\*\*

June is the name of our commitment.  
The sun stands still  
to watch us tumble,  
fumble, crawl over ourselves,  
hit the light, thumb  
in my mouth, tasting

an inconceivable yesterday.

(End of this chapter of precisions)

\*\*\*

Honey lasts forever.  
Men can eat honey,  
    Pelagius said,  
& know themselves slowly,  
meeting each act or not-act  
as the bee meets the flower,  
capable by her nature  
of choosing the right one.

The sin would be not doing this.  
 Doubting the act,  
     doubting your digestion.

The magical bees of the island of Britain  
 sang in his head

where all the honey went  
 the sea god his father sent

to nourish the chance  
 of human possibility.

All we can do  
 (as things stand,  
     as the bees decide)  
 is know what we do.

Tastes like honey.

In June the bees are busy at the linden  
 & all of this  
 is only a few feet away,  
 I speak of an actual tree  
 rarer than remorse.

\*\*\*

(A NARRATIVE):

An angel came to me today & told me that my vaunted dislike of narrative reveals an unwillingness on my part to be accountable for anyone's acts, including my own. I contended that narrative in fact implies a guilt-greediness, a false insistence on selection. Let the selection be natural (I punned), let what happened reveal itself more fully, truly, in what-happens-next. If that were true (he smiled), I would need only one pair of wings. You are clearly in the grip of a comfort-

able belief in causality, & excuse yourself from natural act. Though the corn ripens in its own season, you can *go with it* while it grows. That makes all the difference in the world.

Look (I said), I hate the theatre, I want *now* to turn in- to *then* in such a subtle, self-motivated way it feels like *now* all the time, only this one present moment, where I am responsible for what I do now. That's why I've been quoting Pelagius, & now that other Irishman who said History was a nightmare from which he strove to awaken. I'm glad you spoke of ripening, because that is what I want, to let the moment ripen, to be *momentum*. I do not want to turn back before.

The angel smiled again at me (as one smiles kindly at a deft prevarication) & said: That sounds nice. But these three pairs of wings I wear are to hide & to reveal, to propel my intelligence through the enigma of time, perhaps to deny it at last, since the Work or Arcanum of angels is the End of Time. You are striving to assert what some would call an angelic intelligence, total in each motion. In calling it that, you confuse the end of time with the beginning of time. You are just another lover of time, stalling, slurping up the honey, warring & creating & theologizing to keep the sun still on the mountain. You trust causality implicitly because you are begotten, not created. Angels are created beings, & all their science is will. Even now you have forgotten your own intention in these pages: to discover something in form or in music, & already you're making me speak prose. Learn narrative, & be kind to it, so you can learn the operation of will in time, & what kinds of creatures have will, or whether will is your tricky name for what everything in the world keeps on doing. How can you know your will until you've seen &

seen recorded everything you've ever "done", everything that has ever happened in your sensorium? You think you're quoting Pelagius, but it is I who brought you to consider him, first of the self-styled Christians to make it plain that we are accountable for each act, every act & every abstention --- *& are responsible for nothing beyond that.*

I was getting angry then, though I was being convinced.

There's a war going on (I said), there is violence & stupidity & self-destruction; the planets run & recur in their cycles, & every jolt they give us spills over into war & cruelty. The sons of God, who honor god in flesh & openness, are everywhere slain & imprisoned. It is not just now --- it is at every stage of human history, the greed & cruelty that enslave & destroy. How do we even have a right to talk, walk on our feet, stand on a continent where Cortez did what he did, where anger & fear & hatred & suspicion & murder are the natural condition? Where the books of the Aztecs were burnt & black men were sold & young men today are made slaves of a war? It was never different. In Pelagius' time the slaves were sold & citizens enslaved, rulers flayed alive. His god dies on the cross. What is the sense of narrative? What can it tell us? We do not love, we do not live in honor. If there are causes, we have never deciphered them. If there is a cure, it has been hidden from the beginning of time. Why do men take pleasure in killing & destroying? What is that pleasure? Is *history* the name of it? Did anything else *ever* happen? The animal delights in his *here-&-now*, & poets now have tried to recover that again, declare it, a plenary experience, the moment filled. Our cortical memories, that are supposed to be stocked with situational devices, to warn or protect us, are they anything but treasure houses of barbarous images, records of torture & dismay? If that is the



world's will, I turn against it, "turn my body from the sun" in search of the exact moment.

The angel seemed to pause; at first I thought he was stuck for any kind of answer. Then I knew he was waiting for my anger to simmer down. This time he did not smile. These facts & stories in your mind are accurate, he said, but where in them do you see anything but what a man did to something, or to another man? The tale of human ugliness has only one meaning --- men did these things, & only one hope --- men could *choose* not to do them. It seems, as you suggest, a vain hope, or an unlikely one. Cancer is the sign of incarnation, the souls coming down to choose human bodies to work out their meanings, their "salvation." Capricorn is the gate of return, the way out, at least of this human condition. In between stretch the deserts of horror you've spoken of (clumsily --- you could do it better if you knew more of the History you disdain). What men call *Will* is a joke, an unreal thing. Human will is what men have always done, mechanically, unconsciously; will is the vector a mathematician could *infer* from their behavior. But that behavior can be changed by conscious awareness. It takes a million years, but it took many millions for you to become the super-killers you are now.

Or you are a jar into which all the honey of time has been poured. When time ends, the jar will break & there will be left only the honey you've gathered or restored. Do you understand? I don't think you do. But stay with it, tell the story of all past time, make all the things & songs & environments you can. Remember your intention as you began to work these pages out. Bring them a new thing.

Charles Stein:

(3 poems

# SUZIE' S THING

at home with herself  
in back of the hornets  
back of the white garage

it could have been a kind of arbor

the motor bike was stalled there

the rubber tires  
hung from the warped beam

it could have been the kind of place she needed  
to be alone in

once in a while

to be alone in the bright air

but all at once it was her  
brother coming for her with a hasty grin  
and overalls and swaggering  
in a manner that his mother could not read

she

put her hand back to stop him

Her brother had the pump in his left hand  
and smiled broadly  
gauging rubber tires.

It was assumed  
her hair was black  
and her little asses  
flattened on the leather cycle seat.

She had her friends enough  
to unconcern her.

Peter came out of the kitchen with a  
pocket full of mace.

.

Up the bath house  
her little friends  
began to fuck and scream  
the dogs off

and other girls went in  
cutting the water with satin dives  
for the light  
blasting from the pool wall  
under water.

---

if the car won't go ...

well it won't  
one of these days

I know  
it will die  
and I  
am careless  
to get its oil changed  
see about a heater for the cold  
weather coming on

and think  
this unbefitting  
the care

that if it come to evidence in poetry  
must there betoken  
its active source in life

how shall I reform  
name  
the busy objects that clutter the room ...

the poem  
cleans everything

the sun  
this morning on  
the snow

---

go, shoe

old man in it  
too

---



## THE BEREFT

It is sufficient suffering to vanish never,

I think of Selma, Steve, and Charles.  
Names haunt midnight veins and Times  
Square daylight roar.  
John and Ruth, mercy, steadfastness.

The wind is in our heads,  
no matter what we drink or pop into blood,  
it shrieks across the blinded avenues and swathes our bodies  
in the filthy net of memory.

To be unforgiving is to live.

When we, bereft of love,  
realize to forgive ourselves and whom we love,  
we spend,  
rejoice in good forgiveness of those we  
never loved enough,  
bereave ourselves at last in glory

and we die.



Paul Blackburn:

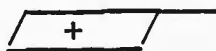
J O U R N A L S : Nov/Dec . 1970 : Hibernation

"He stuffed bear in a cave all  
winter. Now we know."

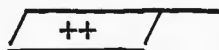
The darkness wins  
here . We miss those early birds, the worms  
are silent as always under the slow turf . the  
spruce and hemlock move their branches against the window

Our sense of strangeness  
displacement  
uneasiness is soothed  
(by the way) by the way  
our bodies curl into each other . the early light  
wenches thru, that freshness, then

the busy sound of the pot flushing, the  
child waking up, cheerful for a change .  
the branches moan a bit in the cold wind.  
Day' s begun.



The darkness wins  
 here . a car on the street outside  
 soon disappears, the sound of birds  
       loud at dusk, subsides . We live  
 in this near-winter dark, live near each  
 other in the darkness, the boy's pre-sleep  
 whimper-and-moan from the next room grows also  
 into silence as he goes  
 down into sleep . We  
 warm one another finally . The next sound you hear  
 will be the radiator .



What the hours are,

lines on top of the mountain in November, a

word I' ad never noticed but in sembral terms, I

quote an ancient allibone, an

alley of bones now turned into

a

semblance . My friend Bolles stays tight with young clits,

and thinks he' ll commit suicide by

hanging a show of his drawings on the reinforced steel

plates of a freighter headed for England,

see what survives a 14-day trip . An  
 other friend has an earache which her friend will soften by  
 being close enuf to be by . But the

question, what is the question?

It is

another wipeshed now . The

child sleeps,

Young wife, my love, climbs sleepily to the floor and sits

in my lap, I ex-

plore hell, only the certainties may wed death, let all that

go, I want to

K N O W when I'll be there again, when

you will .

zelda, granite moth, mary jane . the other

chances were 50% . chances

are .

The anchor swings like a camel-quirt these

days,

the best stays, ma belle, not  
 mirabelle, nor kitsch, no kirsch,  
 what we eliminate,  
 not picayunes or gauloises, but  
 where the N sits at the n of nite, not  
 out of sight . profane . profound . commit, climb  
 into it altogether, o candle, o end of,  
  
 framboise, the eau de vie of .. How that mountaintop  
 looks like the plane of . the spotted trees, the lake we all  
 saw from some angle the  
 pilots differed, no matter, we  
 kept the difference / even  
 we did not know the difference  
  
 kept the anger & the love  
 equal . there's a sequel? no, there  
 is no sequel . Read the trib tomorrow morning, there's  
 no sequel . wimmins lib  
 has take she all, Mr. Hall .

Donald,

keep your prick up . it won' t last .

(Witches passed)

The magic stays . the boat leaves . arrives S' thampton .

Cramped in the lifeboat, still she twitch her ass, an

equal

movement, left to right . Whatsit

doing?

that hand around my right tit?

The hand is steady . Are you ready? Present

passports, please.

11/25

"Take it easy, but take it."

Sittin by the farmhouse,

waitin for my friend to come

dog

barks in the distance

boats on the bay as well, it' s

a long time, David,

we ain' t had no right to some

other girl, some other time of our own, hell,

I don't know what you think of when I think of struggle, but  
 bit off more than he could . it was apple-blossom time in  
 old hat and walkin down to the farmhouse by the bay, he  
 stood for a time, listenin to dogs bark

I think of mountainsides, slickery mud between the rocks  
and tree-holds under light rain, my ass full of mud in full  
camera, mist across the eyelashes .

I think of driving 72 hours to find  
they've already left . Fieldful of snow, 7 feet deep  
you gotta walk thru .

## What' ll we do before lunch?

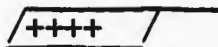
Brush the sweat off our arms, eyebrows, forehead, nose  
itches .

How we do not walk or climb or wait, but stand : scan  
"take it

easy, but take it"

any way you can .

(for Tobe & David :  
28. XI. 70)



**5. XII. 70 : morning conversation**

I sit in the kitchen  
from the first light

on, look at the light snow  
 drifted to the edge of garage roof, snuggled  
 into the leaf drift

Carlos eats

the coffee heats

sky lightens to yellow

pale sunlight on

the white walls of white houses

He talks

wanting a refill on the applejuice

Red

coffeegrinder sits

full of

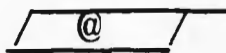
new-ground coffee

The coffeepot coming to boil

talks to me .

Mint grows higher .  
 cigarette smokes itself in the ashtray .  
 Carlos lifts the cereal bowl to finish the milk

He talks to me . His own words .

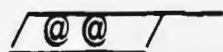


(the news at 5 below: for Ron & Michelle)

Wind out of the West at  
 10 mph, and snow  
 drifts down across this hill  
 slowly and fine . Branches  
 with a ragged leaf or two move  
 lightly in the wind outside the window  
 wisps of white blow from drifted and plowed  
 piles . Blue  
 is a color I remember  
 yesterday from further south . The sun  
 is California Dreamin' . This is the news .

Mouth pressed to another mouth  
 the spirit of semen, a massive unload-  
 ing of selves and seed . Food  
 for our tongues, o very nice indeed .

Fish lie quiet beneath the frozen streams  
 Ragged leaves move in the wind while  
 we smile at one another in the dark .  
 move near sleep .





(after hearing sonia sanchez down  
at corey

All that sweet, warm

blackness going down

what do be more dream

than real, sometime, it

bein this grey boy talkin, after

all that hard, sweet

blackness solfening up his heart, seems I

trudge uphill thru the snowfall

thru the trees and lights and havto

spend the next two hours shovelin

sidewalk and driveway clear

of all this white shit .

11. XII.

" ...temperature's rising  
it isn't surprising,  
she certainly can..."

The roofs are high  
and the gutters deep .

The sound of  
water falling  
feeds  
our sleep . we are bound  
to wrap the sky around us, while  
we try to become that tree  
our bodies  
wave around  
while the rain falls and the gutters run full and  
the seed leaps .

+@+@+@

18.XII.70 : wings

Rain water this thaw, snow  
water . water drops  
on the needles of spruce . the wind

blows in from west southwest . Water  
 drips from icicles along the gutters, gutters  
 loosing a piss-stream of water that the wind  
 controls, wavers the stream.      The birds dream  
    too soon of seeds.

                                 The top of the hemlock  
 cracked under the snowload last storm,  
 tender branches flutter and scratch the west window.  
 A pattern of sounds and wind .

                                 What' s the matter?  
 Driveway' s clear . why worry, friend?  
 Words come or do not come . The thaw persists  
 in all our minds . A single crow far off  
 talks to himself .

CAW . CAW /  
 be well, crow .  
 Find yr brothers  
 someplace south of here .

Theodore Enslin:

# SYNTHESIS,

4.

To be at some length:  
Which is more the result  
than the method.

Whoso-

ever

is at hand  
to begin or beget---  
and to hold respect  
for some things---  
not in the usual ways.

Monks,

who wandered over the land,  
picking up scraps of paper,  
burning them in reverence  
for what the paper was,  
and for no other reason---  
as penance,  
or as wanderers---simply.

To be at hand  
when one is needed---  
but this is not often.  
An absence is needed  
far more than we are.  
Swinging on the gate---  
the far sense of a gate,

and tearing down  
 in more violence  
 than we might have built  
 whatever turned us  
 to see it as nothing---  
 and erased---  
                     as a relief.

(The round log burns longest,  
 against the rump of another  
 sleeping in a nest of flames:  
 No phoenix save the heat,  
 the fused slag,  
 grey ash, cold as the wind that blows it.)

The air  
                     of a  
 popular song  
                     lightsome  
 it dances  
                     it takes  
 it goes  
                     over  
 itself  
                     and  
                     under  
 it is the air  
                     and the strain  
 it is a music  
                     complete  
 in itself.  
                     I am grateful  
 for it.

And a time when men of goodwill,  
 whoever,  
                     think in terms

of men,  
                     and despise  
 the code of rulers  
 who talk knowingly  
 of safety,  
                     and burn villages  
 - children and old men -  
 to prove it.  
 The men of goodwill spit  
 and quarrel among themselves,  
 but rise to the moment.  
 They will not always be denied,  
 or gainsaid.  
 An optimism, not quite real,  
 but a moment for them,  
 and at last a stopover  
 for thanksgiving.

And  
                     there are many things---  
 as  
                     "snow piled up in a silver bowl."  
 We know little of them---  
 but we know the snow,  
 and the bowl.

At times a wish that no more books  
 should come to me---  
 that no more men should write---  
 nor I.  
 Moving through pages I become  
 cleaner---  
                     but I doubt  
 that the paper is sacred.

These three:  
                     Spots

stand before my eyes---  
a small one  
                    winks out---  
the others rise and shift.  
One goes,  
                the other,  
finally,  
                by will,  
reappears,  
goes on its business,  
and then dies.

In an age of famine  
there is illusion of more  
than can be used---  
but those things used  
raven at the heart.  
They do not satisfy.  
There are those  
always  
who sit contented  
with a bare house:  
"Three rooms---an old shoe."

Use of the will  
saps and breaks it.  
There is no musculature  
to keep it,  
and the headstrong  
break skulls on stones  
which are illusion,  
called by names  
of real things.

That there is no beginning  
to the road,  
equals

beyond it---  
 does not deny  
 or affirm a road.  
 Whatever there may be of it  
 is in the self,  
                     nor cry  
 of an enlightenment.  
 Touch things  
                     and you have touched  
 every  
             thing,  
 as thingship  
 completes the cycle.  
 Do not come against it.

So much for the morning.  
 So much for the evenness  
 of temper.  
 So much for impediment.  
 (Or what I strove to find  
 I no longer needed---  
 if I had ever needed it---  
 indeed!)  
 What I once wrote of it---  
 enjoyment  
                     or enjoined  
 on to it.  
 Completing the texts---  
 or completing the day's  
 complaint.

(A pebble which  
 sinks  
             in the sun  
 by the weight  
 of heat  
             not by



its own weight.)

A concern for what is reverence---  
what is respect.

There is a difference  
sharply

between them.

At one time

one is impertinent,  
and the other,

equally,  
in its own time.

A time to thumb a nose  
at both of them---

and pull the gods down,  
trample the sacred  
in as much mud  
as a wet spring can give.

Perhaps the concern itself  
is at fault---

to take things  
at hand

one after another.

To go out the door  
with no thought of coming back,  
or whether the hinges pull  
out of the casing.

None of us will do these things  
easily---

all of us will do them.

Whatever is of blindness  
(that also)  
whatever of ineptness  
(that also)  
whatever of death

(that also) and  
joy health  
wisdom  
all together running  
as a pure fouled stream.

The men stand ready---  
the bowman from old tribes,  
or the skilled in war  
of any time.

But their readiness  
is a lack of strength,  
fear

and helplessness.  
To them give pity  
as pity is due them---  
and walk by.

We do not hear their music,  
and there are fields to walk in,  
aisles in the forest  
that sweat in darkness:  
The sun midway overhead.  
These things we know---

these sounds

and these silences.

The dreams of reverence,  
always in these dreams  
a sense of loss

as if  
I had given up myself  
to something other---

alien  
and dark, nor real enough  
to count on.

## Reality---

the solid moment  
 thrown out tentative---  
 a bridge---a span of thread  
 tossed by a spider,  
 sometimes reaching a side  
 beyond me.  
 To this, my fortune,  
 and away from this, my hand extends---  
 clutching -  
                   clutching -

Spend talk on trifles,  
 and it clears the air  
 for silence,  
 the sound of silence  
 which recreates itself  
 from space  
                   and  
 islands in that space.  
 We remember after words  
 reverberate  
 A W A Y .

I do not speak full voice,  
 a piece of voice  
 breaks off against  
 the wounded infinite.  
 High winds,  
                   the winter night  
 breaks up as I  
 attempt to pass it.  
 Ascent  
                   ascending  
 hand over hand  
 to the old man's ' May Hill. '

The strong man walking  
on his last day,  
in the rain;  
his strength leached through  
as lily stems  
crushed white and broken  
after the snows have gone---  
but a strong man, still  
erect, and with a sharp salute  
for those he knew,  
who wondered,

hearing of his death

that night.

Away  
away  
an augury  
aweigh--- (outside  
the wind ..  
tuned in again.)

Seems, as particulars,  
the wanderer at large.

A chill,  
as if a ghost had touched me---  
a laying on of hands  
somewhere  
outside  
among islands  
drowned  
and seas heaved  
over  
in the dust.

As if the world were not

the world I knew,  
 and with the old woman,  
 " Lackadaisy on us,  
 this can' t be I. "

No hopes for reprieve  
 along this line.

A madness---sheer---  
 the single madness  
 of a man alone.

Whoever scans the clouds for birds,  
 or sight of birds,  
 whoever---

but that has been said,  
 as it never has been.

The men at large---  
 the armies over the seas,  
 the brand-bearing satraps.  
 It all ends with fullness,  
 and foaming at the mouth.  
 No one else inquires the way,  
 so we walk it,  
 hoping they will not.

We are outside  
 in a year of outsides,  
 straddled  
 by our own queerness.  
 The querulous gasping  
 of birds we do not know,  
 or a tree that depends on them,  
 as all things

all in all.

Whenever the wind bird triumphs  
 whenever the world is open,  
 and the spring comes on again  
 whenever the sorrows of rivers

flow black through the land,  
 or the dead heroes sprout  
 new moss:

Whenever it is,  
 there is life again,  
 more than enough to move by,  
 and to know the new world  
 out of the old one.

It is not enough to guess it,  
 or to hazzard---  
 for the world breaks hazzard,  
 and the guess remakes.

It starts,  
                   but not a beginning,  
 not an end.

A rain which is the end of rain,  
 a coming in  
 and hesitance of seasons.

As a man may know it,  
 he will know these things far off -  
 - to which he tends -  
 but he does not go there.

So much he feels,  
 and so much senses:  
 As the salt far inland  
 on the wet bark of trees.  
 Did the storm bring seas  
 or

          rather  
 did the sea come in to him,  
 and leave again?  
 He has been at the bottom,  
 and he has risen.  
 Strength which began and ended,  
 as he sat quietly  
                   in a still room

without knowing where  
or what outside

had changed him.

The ninth wave announces  
the ebb

on flux---  
the fullest entry

{ above  
below

and it is here the wind blows  
carrying the salt

inland---  
the savor of the land  
is in the sea---

as the land  
gave it once

from mines  
above the sources---  
what flows down,  
then out once more  
to make over  
impress

and recoil.

Settles but is never settled.

Who walks here  
feels the wind,  
but does not know  
where it goes, or whence it comes,  
perhaps circling  
from the very place  
where he stands---  
perhaps,

but an end  
to it---  
to speculation  
which can bring nothing  
but a misery,

a confusion, as the sea  
 in all its parts is not confused.  
 Banish thinking,  
 live only in things,  
 the elements which make  
 a chaos

and archaeus  
 which begins life  
 - becomes it -  
 both in disease

and  
 the healing of it.  
 Complete whatever it was  
 that had to be completed.  
 Break it open  
 before finality---  
 the remembered always  
 and by all means.  
 Commence the admixture  
 of what is pure.  
 "What moves the least,  
 moves most,"  
 or

the name of it.  
 Sand spurrey and sea holly,  
 the high goldenrod  
 which blooms latest of all---  
 samphire in the tide pools,  
 crabs and mussels,  
 maenad and medusa  
 live here tossed  
 in kelp locks.  
 The sea - close - heaves .  
 Its bulk creates  
 beyond bulk.

The stiffening mud bears little weight,



breaks

a thin wall

below

on cautious feet.

above

Whether in or out of a world

is a question

for past mastery.

I am not that master,

living within the thing

and not the idea

of that

or disparate things.

Where will a man go

to align these measures---

to hear a music,

formal

but of its own form,

not the mold?

Could be,

could be---

do not deter the going.

It is easier for breath,

to stand,

but soon chokes

in fog.

Compare---

but

the method destroys,

and to synchronize the breath

and pulse

may indicate

old age and death:

(somewhere I once said this.)

That the will gives up first,

Francis Judd  
Cooke

that there is no health in agreement.  
Watching the spirals  
I become involved in them---  
these which are the illusions  
of orbs  
                    or jagged lines---  
the same forms  
                                    again and again---  
and the terror  
                                    synchronized.

(When the rocks first begin  
to show through the end of  
this winter is near,  
the commencement  
of the following  
winter.

Gather more wood,  
there is need of it.  
The clear sky promises storm.)

Made my way through a thicket.  
It was difficult.  
I looked for a forest,  
its silence, and filtered light  
midday.

Carefully  
not to crush  
whatever lies -  
- the substance  
of a shadow  
the outside  
of a dream  
but to walk

quickly

and without let.  
Once in and once out.

As if I were impressed with deed  
by thinking.

Anticipation -  
the breath held back-  
but breath taken  
to hold.

Some have walked into a grave  
from a grave,

buried alive  
in their own shit.  
Complain that the bell  
sounds too rarely,  
or that someone else shakes it.  
Return from there to the woods---  
the wisdom of the woods  
and tillage -  
the wise acre.

They asked a question,  
but I could not answer---  
'nor should I have tried.

A storm which bears imminently  
to rites of passage.

Immunity  
in seeming vulnerable.

The wound  
tearing and healing---  
a lesser and a greater.

That what I am about  
learns me, to know me,  
more than I can know.

It is inward and out---  
 the branching  
                                   but a fortifying  
 at the root.

                          A man stores  
 intelligence of this/  
   /that/  
 salvaged scrap---  
 has no notion of its context,  
 beyond believing that it will be of use---  
 often ends with balls of twine,  
 or chests of foil,  
 accumulated at his death  
 along with other effects  
 useless

                          maimed  
 and pitiable.  
 All at once he finds the lever,  
 hinges out a star.  
 It all fits!

It can happen,  
                                   and it does.

He breathes  
                                   and the joining  
 gives him room to breathe.

And if the heat from my body  
 equals that of a candle,  
 it is dispersed,  
                                   and will not burn  
 as candle heat  
                                   which catches,  
 swings  
                           handhold on handhold  
 through the woods  
                                   exults

in deaths,  
                     not in deaths,  
 but at its movement---  
 that it is fire,  
 functions as fire  
                     and  
 nothing else.  
 That I must center  
 in this way  
 become  
                     whatever it is  
 that I am---  
                     now disparate---  
 in a purity---  
 as of fire.

There is need of it---  
 the world suffers for lack of it,  
 and the brooks go dry  
 in drought.  
 But who gives fire  
 dies of it.

                    We do not pass  
 without a giving  
 which can destroy -  
 or can give out.  
 The gods know nothing of it,  
 nor how a man may suffer.  
 Who sets his jaw into the wind  
 feels ice from that wind,  
 turns away wincing---  
 or goes through paralyzed,  
 but obdurate.  
 What friend have we met  
 who will share it?  
 The result is bitter,  
 if friendship is tried too far.  
 A man carries fire singly:

one  
       man  
 at a time.

A hold on wisdom,  
 or a relaxing -  
                               - no hold -  
 becomes the strongest,  
 swings through confusion.  
 What it means, will not do.  
 We do not ask     wisely  
 though we continue,  
                               knowing this.  
 Wherever a man leaves a part,  
 he leaves the whole---  
 the firebearers, as the rest.  
 To whom a hand turns,  
 or a fist closes.  
 It is measured.

Mentioned  
                               and made over  
 the business  
                               completed  
 before it started.  
 As the warning from a wise man:  
 " It is not thy part  
 to complete the work,  
 yet art thou not altogether free  
 to desist from it."  
 Exactly so,  
                               as if a hinge swung  
 open  
                               a large door -- it  
 stood aside until the man  
 had passed.

Rabbi  
 Tarphon

There is no return---

and no way to find the door again.  
Which is as well.  
It guards against faintness  
and weak will.  
Whatever is found further  
is to be followed.  
All of it has use.  
Some will die in the attempt,  
but the will is there:  
to go on---  
to find out  
whatever may be found.  
Strange connections  
but no accidents.

I rose,  
half-light,  
listened to the birds  
a few moments,  
quelled nausea with hot tea,  
and went about the business  
which I had set for the day.  
No one will deny me that.  
There is no one here.  
A haze of dust  
from the road---  
somewhere---  
a shake of the head and  
back to it.  
Completing the dullness  
of done things---  
the mindless efforts  
which eventually set free  
to real concerns.  
It is once  
and once  
and again once.

Tenuous the thread,  
 as strength is tenuous, always.  
 That which will break  
 will hold the most,  
 a straw float out a hurricane  
 while brick

collapses.

A truism,  
 but it bears thought.

Intensely held there,  
 I look out to see  
 the darkness gather,  
 or the purse

tighten.

It might be a chance.  
 Who could know this?  
 No wisdom

ah

and ah---

look out

this distance.

Scream

or silence,

be and being.

Complete

complain

tie words

and do not

revise them.

Or

to look another way,  
 build securely

lash

edge to edge---

brighten,

oh star,

star wisdom.



Shake head.

The firebearer  
may not breathe in  
his gift.

It is a light  
and warmth for others.  
He is alone  
among snakes and vultures.

Constant on my right hand,  
the threatening bank of clouds---  
the leaning trees  
against expectancy.  
A storm which does not come.  
A man at work,  
hauling wood and water.  
Or later, with his books,  
always the apprehensive glance.  
A clearing.

Break and make,  
wind and no rain---  
enough for one day.

Or

if you want to  
clean the brass teapot  
completely  
let it burn on  
- tea and all -  
and then let it burn  
an hour more.

Instructions  
for isopathy.

To wound  
to wound---

to ward the wound  
 away  
     the wind---  
 aghhh!  
     Clear the head  
 and sleep.

When a man speaks to me of moments,  
 of 'truth'

    'decision'  
 'finality'

    I leave him.

He's no man for me,  
 and none who understands  
 words or motives behind words.  
 Some of us have known the ways  
 toward these things---  
 that they slip

    out  
 from under the feet.  
 Reasons we do not have---  
 truth we have far less,  
 the end

    so  
 beyond the end.  
 Some have attempted,  
 and these were the firebearers,  
 not in defiance of gods,  
 but of men who thought  
 they understood the gods.  
 and the calmness  
 overshadows violence---  
 destruction---  
 or the sword of peace.

Tensed, as the root  
 arched above ground---

certain old trees  
 holding a pollard life  
 with aged fingers  
 bunched in the earth---  
 the silence

The Bonney  
 Woods

of senescent age.  
 Overpowering the growth below  
 which learns to wait,  
 as all of us must wait  
 at certain times.

The fury of such growth---  
 and the sadness of decay  
 which is not a sadness merely,  
 dripping brown water  
 as the morning ice

melts.

A rhyme of early spring---  
 the sharp nostril relaxes  
 at midday,

nods sleepily,  
 and comes alive in shadow.  
 We do not know this often,  
 or come upon it,  
 but it is the green marrow of our bones,  
 as in remembrances---  
 the whispering

systole  
 of the blood.

And often no more patience---  
 the push:

"Get out of my way  
 I no longer need words for promise,  
 a realization,

knowing that this  
 is promise extended---  
 nothing more.

Whoever denies me this,  
denies himself,  
and merely that.  
I do not keep my brother.

As paranoia is  
corollary/ancilla  
to unreasonable greatness,  
so the greatness---  
always  
beyond reason.                      The reason  
or a quality.

Or misunderstanding is not excuse,  
and to excuse  
                        becomes an issue,  
a rift that cankers  
decomposes  
                        in the heart  
a stasis  
                        and a quickening  
towards death.

Whatever seems the pulse---  
listen to it,  
nor break with it---  
beyond the involuntary  
there lies this sense of death  
which, in a sense, we seek  
and move towards.  
Yet it departs  
once  
and ever,  
but is in the stones,  
the land beneath them:  
The fluid

which is cold to us  
 but warm to the earth.  
 It bears its salts---  
 It bears its wisdoms,  
 or it bears,  
 and there is an end to it.  
 As if a man might sense this  
 in himself,  
 and save the detour of thinking.  
 A division which,  
 in the end,  
 will decay as rich  
 as any other.  
 The end of it is the beginning,  
 is neither - as  
 neither can exist.

Or to listen to a popular song---  
 its speech---  
 if the heritage is long enough,  
 'it will do us some good.'  
 And in the midst of other affairs  
 we will stop a moment.

German  
 Street band

Take flight  
                   take wisdom  
 and take  
                   bitter night  
 for secrets  
                   close  
 behind the snow.  
 A leisurely time for some  
 becomes tense  
 as the walls fade  
 and we stand in elements  
 basic to us.

It does not do

to look these things in the face,  
 or too closely to describe them.  
 Daily we are brought these warnings  
 as regularly as a bottle of milk  
 or a newspaper on the doorstep,  
 and yet---

yet

still

to become human  
 we must face these things  
 at least once

now

or at the hour of death  
 which may be the same hour.  
 Or recapitulate,  
 down to the broken knees,  
 and the broken rest.

Chiasma:

There is something missing  
 a tune---

a floating---

a sense of floating---  
 or that other  
 unnamed

which is human

and which is lost  
 for its humanity.

Well,

we did it,

but the sense is a shrug,  
 and we might as well  
 not have done it.

You know.

I do.

The tune

the floating  
age on age  
which  
destroys.

Ask me these questions.  
I will not answer you  
when I have learned the answers.  
If ever,

or darkness,  
or the winter,  
or as we were.

A time to let blood.

Chiasma  
Time passes  
which is not time  
no measure  
Chiasma

And if I tried that life  
without you --  
even the

conceptual  
distance

I tried against  
myself -- against  
what I could live  
or

what I could conceive.  
You were there,

and  
you were my beloved,  
not as I once tried  
to construct a figure  
and then

through many women  
cancelled it out.  
You were the sense of time,

you were the end of it---  
 the weight of my being,  
 and what I thought about it.  
 You could  
                     hear me out  
 and  
 good lord, what is the speech---  
 the---  
                     what we cannot speak  
 or know.

As it was hinted:  
 That I found that day  
 the books in which to know  
 what was needed  
                                     to know,  
 and how to act,  
 how  
                     each of us could reach  
 what was needed,  
                                     and in one book

it was said:  
 'As you grow ready for it,  
 somewhere or other you will  
 find what is useful for you  
 in a book.'  
 Or the morning I knew that I would hear  
 certain things before the end of that day,  
 and I did,  
                     to identify  
 would be pointless.  
 It sufficed.  
 Time after time,  
                                     through suffering;  
 and through trials  
 which may not be more  
 than those



which most men bear  
(but are unique:

Our own.)

we came through at the moment  
which seemed the darkest.

It is not a hope.

It has gone beyond that.

The certain thing which we must hold,  
through which we move,  
and where we come alive again.

There was word one time---

the legend of the Phoenix.

So we rose from ashes---

could you

have doubted it?

Or could I?

A place where we believed,  
to a place where we were consummate.

The words flow easily

at this moment,

as they have not,

as they will not another time.

What we knew

we did know,

and now we more than know.

I must not hasten it,

what I give you must be ripened

slowly---as I know that thing

which you give me.

A strange man singeth,

and he sings of death,

with every smile

he brings us death,

so we must crush him

and go out together.

There is love---depend on it.  
 The old world lives in love---  
 a strange love

we do not  
 change it.

Give and give.  
 my love  
     my life  
 my life  
     my love  
 the palindrome.

[note: this is the 4th  
 section of a long poem,  
 a work-in-progress,  
 of which 20 section are  
 completed. #1 and #2  
 appeared in Caterpillar  
 eleven, and #3 in issue  
 fourteen. More sections  
 to follow.]

## NOTES, REVIEWS, &amp; LETTERS

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‡ Gerrit Lansing's "Working In The Lower Red Field" first appeared in print as a broadside published 1969 by The Restau Press, 10 Chauncy St., Cambridge 02138 ‡ The work of George Herms in this issue is, in chronological order, 1) Hero Collage #3 (1960), 2) Continuous Variation (1966), 3) Birds of Chaos (1970), & 4) untitled (1971). ‡ The screenprints of R. B. Kitaj are, in the order in which they appear in the issue: 1) W. H. AUDEN 1969, 2) FOR LOVE Robert Creeley 1966, 3) ED DORN 1967, 4) STAR BETELGEUSE Robert Duncan 1967, 5) HAIL THEE WHO PLAY Michael McClure 1969, 6) CHARLES OLSON 1969, 7) DEERSKIN John Wieners 1969, 8) FIFTIES GRAND SWANK Morton Feldman 1968, 9) REVOLT ON THE CLYDE Hugh Macdiarmid 1967, & 10) KENNETH REXROTH 1969. ‡ This fall Doubleday-Anchor will publish A Caterpillar Anthology, made up of material selected from issues #1 thru #12. The Duncan and N. O. Brown material from the now extinct first and second issues of the magazine will be included. ‡ In Caterpillar #13 I spoke about hoping to begin to pay contributors by this spring. Since that time it has been impossible to raise any money for the magazine, and while the 13th and 14th issue were a little smaller than previous issues, the situation now is worse than it was this fall. So this is a plea for funds. Somehow I will do 20 issues, but unless something extraordinary happens Caterpillar will end with #20. To continue past #20, Caterpillar would have to be underwritten by some institute or school that guaranteed its deficit as well as contributor payments ‡

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JOANNE KYGER, PLACES TO GO, BLACK SPARROW PRESS, 1970

I dug around all over the house for The Tapestry and the Web so I could read it again next to Places to Go, muttering someone had taken it, picturing its artfully sunfaded maroon cover. But I couldn't find it, leaving the question of the other's act conjectural, a part of the current on out the door, into the yard and thence to the higher and wider regions. There is no piano to play the scale. The sunlight does that, not the clocks. The kitchen pans and cups, not sentimentally, like dolls, are parts of ourselves a limpidity like the weather in which we see beyond us, quite emptily, compassionate. An old friend is supposed to buy food for dinner tonight, but his parsimony means I may have

to spend just as much for there to be enough. If it were certain the edge of relation would be as dull as Clarence King said California's weather was. But there is a lot to be said for small, infrequent doses, to keep irritability in sight. The dialectic of boredom and nervous excitement is pitched most finely in the kitchen, as a place to go, preparatory to starting out for those higher and wider regions, we infrequently visit, especially my friend, who doesn't hike much. Such a place as Puerto Rico must be lovely, that tropicallity an accomodation of the palpable void more aerial than any colder shoreline. The quality of impatience, if followed to the tree tops, up where all the action is, as in the rain forest, leads to light, "such an enormous possibility... full of excitement and wonder." As is this book.

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Ronald Firbank keeps coming to mind on this occasion, but that may be very inexact, finally. Certainly there is a kind of Edwardian choice flow, a Delian Brownonian movement; as with Firbank, despite the surface of elegant chat and fret, the artistry is very tough-minded. He would never have managed the metaphysical tenseness and muscularity throughout these poems, say especially in "Descartes and the Splendor of"; and she does not attempt the complexities of dialogue Firbank was master of. But both are absorbed by the richness of the daily, even the commonplace, surrounding and revealing, la vie intime essentially dramatic and non-historical, in which the point of repartee and voices is continually readdressed in apparent disinterest (how many poems here refuse any regular margin). There is constantly the dynamic interplay between the intense importance of what is said, and the doubting of its exact value -- the seriousness of which can never be allowed to control the tone. Dextrous humor, wit, is quite literally felt to be vital, necessary for life. She moves very fast indeed, a speed of the head, not so much of the viscera; a speed which someone of an era not learned in Stein, Spicer and Buddhism could never manage. In no other poet I know is a painterly poetic more richly multi-voiced (e. g., "The Imaginary Apparitions" especially). "I get people and landscapes confused throughout." She is only incidentally satiric, having no continual aim of moral or social regeneration, only of clarity and exactitude. Among her contemporaries, the poet I think of her having most affinity with is Larry Goodell, as a comparison of their "novels" might indicate -- but I doubt if they know each other. My own favorite of Places to Go, "A Test of Fantasy", seems to open into another greater space, in which compassion does speak, where what is loved more openly admits itself, into that "paradisical level, incompleated." "Whoever you revere will come back tenfold upon you and lighten the burden carried as those who desire the warmth and necessity of communication." Only great care can give us that. Places to Go is a place I enjoy going, very much.

-- Kenneth Irby

March 1 (Basil Bunting's 71st Birthday), 1971  
Roswell, New Mexico

Dear Clayton,

Thank you for writing. I only hope I am not too late to be included in the issue, with a poem and a letter about Lorine Niedecker, plus some of my customary mordant, 70mph observations on the Republic.

Tom and I are in Roswell, between the teaching assignments in Lawrence, Kansas and Washington University, St. Louis. The New York Times could not inform itself sufficiently of Lorine Niedecker's work and life to bother to inform the Nation of its loss. Such journals do not know either that Bruce Goff is now living in Tyler, Texas; that there is a marvellous "Garden of Eden" folly in Lucas, Kansas for Clarence John Laughlin to photograph; or that Milton Resnick is working in Roswell, New Mexico, liking it, and painting lovely things. A finely installed show of Milton's opened yesterday at the Roswell Museum. He said to me: "One of the good aspects of living out here and away from New York is, nobody says to me, Why don't you change? In New York I have to answer defensively, Because the world is so busy thinking it's changing, there's no need for me to try."

That line of thought takes me quickly to Niedecker. When I think of her, all those years in that tiny house at Black Hawk Island out of Fort Atkinson, Wisconsin, all chatter about being a 'major' poet, about being a Spokesman of One's Generation, about seizing the Power, about 'The Nation' and the 'Reading Public' turns into what it is: simple American greed. How else to explain all the extraordinary careerism abroad in the land? -- or such conspicuous curiosities as 'the bitterness of Lorine's mentor, \_\_\_\_\_'; the poets who play at being The World's Oldest Hippy, The Sad & Gentle Hermit of the American Desert, The Only South Carolina Poet Paid More Than the Football Coach, The Fiery Conscience of the Para-Military Left...

Now and then one sighs and tries to figure out just what all this 'means'. Well, I said it was greed. It's wanting to be a star-fucker and pop-cultist and not 'just' a poet. You can't take the Merz out of Kommerz anymore, no matter what Schwitters did. So, all of it comes down to a disdain for the craft and for a tradition in which one made poems like another made pots, for the use of one or two or a few human beings at a time. I used to think of Lorine Niedecker by the Rock River, making perennials like her peony bushes. I could count on her, count on those utterly refinsed, simple, homely poems, made out of words.

Lorine Niedecker has a lot to teach us, particularly the home-remedies that Confucius and Miss Emily and the Lady Ono no Komachi and Dr. Williams taught before her. She is, like Anyte, a poet who said just enough, quietly, for all the centuries to hear. (I believe it's Rexroth who said that about Anyte's poems in the Greek Anthology, comparing her to the 'strident' Sappho, who

must have suffered from endometriosis.) She was not a 'regionalist' poet, though dolts in large cities would like to pretend that she was, that's the quickest way to put down an old lady who never went to New York but once or twice, on a bus, thirty years ago -- and only to see one poet and his family, not to find out what was happening in the tiresome War of the Agrarians Vs. the Proletarians. She was not a Wisconsin Pen Woman, she was not a housewife who wrote as badly as she painted or arranged flowers. The day I spent with her once was full of talk about our newest poems, about those she had received with great pleasure from Zukofsky and from Ian Hamilton Finlay, about the letters of Keats and of Lawrence. She was a home-body, and we will never have civilized places or a culture in this wilderness until poets are able to sit still and inhabit the previously 'empty' spaces. It took a lot of sitting to learn how to get so much from so little: the peony blossom that could light up the world. An economic structure, a regenerative structure that would help make the enjoyment of the earth more possible for other persons, to follow a line from Buckminster Fuller. 'Beauty' was no problem -- it was built in, not simply cosmetic. That's the difference between Milton Resnick in New Mexico and Peter Hurd, the People's Choice. It's the difference between a man who, like Melville, knows the Food of the Soul is Light & Space (his single-color paintings perhaps look very much like the Land of Enchantment from twelve miles off the surface of the planet, if the imaginative leap is not enough in itself), and an entrepreneur who serves up America's Favorite Stale Nostalgic Deathburger. But gee, Marge, don't you know there's more money in plastic hydrangeas than in a three-day Wisconsin peony blossom?

Charles Olson once said to me: there are only two demands made of a poet. One is, write fresh lines; the other is, live like a poet. Lorine Niedecker was almost alone in her dedication to those demands. She wavered and faltered and 'changed' no more than the peony. (Did not Olson also say that people (read poets) don't change, they only stand more revealed?) Her example is nourishment. I'll try to abide by it when I get to St. Louis and hawk my verbal wares in front of Washington University students in the hope of finding three or four lusty readers, and in the fear of being weighed in the balance and found wanting by the resident faculty hawks: Howard Nenerov, Don Finkel, W.H. Gass, Stanley Elkin. That's a tough league. Anyway, may the poems sound their fresh lines and may my visit not be just another story to add to those fucking dreary ones we all know, about the time so and so dropped all that acid and the students thought he was really groovy; and about how much whiskey Jim Dickey drank and still played the guitar until four a.m. and then broke down the door to the women's dorm; and about how long it took Paul Goodman to seduce the President of the Student Union, about how Allen looked, without his pants dancing in the snow, etc., etc. The old song and dance -- concentrate enough on it and you'll never have to read a poem in the privacy of your own mind or buy a book or anything, gosh. We're getting back pretty close to the mind-blown blather of Gibran and Ella Wheeler Wilcox. Ah, the smell of poesy, how I've always wished I could have been on one of her barge-parties in the Connecticut River...

The other night in Lawrence, Tom and I plunked down \$3.50 per and went in with 6000 others to hear the second performance by 'Mr. Richie Havens.' Mr. Havens kept to the wings the first hour, treating us instead to a listless group of the sob-sister syndrome called "Bob Brown and His Friends." Gee. At quarter to eleven out came the great man with the requisite entourage of plastic-afro-bongo-drummers. He apologized in requisite blurred dopey tones about the fact his fly wasn't yet buttoned and that he had a broken string on the guitar. How it took one back to the days of Dylan Thomas, and one night at the YMHA in 1950 when he'd spilled grenadine all over his white seersucker suit and how he had to make hopeless, embarrassing drunken apologies and leers about it. Mr. Havens then decided that his audience needed an education, consisting mostly of crap about Wilhelm Reich, punctuated interminably by such sounds as "Whew" and "Right?" and "Oh wow." 6000 Kansas University jocks and their dates took this like it was manna from the Golden Arches of McDonald's. Between lectures, Mr. Havens sang four songs in one hour, in his husky, projective way. The more we endured this performance the angrier we got, so we dot up and left and missed his finale number, the big number he did at Woodstock of course.

Well, to tie this episode back to Lorine Niedecker, what had happened? An artist had come into town and conned 12,000 people -- at an average of \$3.00 a head -- with non-art. We came to hear music. I expect only that of a poet, and only that from the fashionable and wealthy Mr. Havens. This does not reduce our man to a simple nigger who sings soulful for cornfed caucasians in eastern Kansas. Havens is not 'better than' art. If I go to the ballpark, I want to see Mays play, I don't want him on the microphone on the first-base line, complaining about his salary contract. If I get in a room before an audience, I don't want to shit on them and explain how I have no voice because I've been up drinking and getting no sleep for three days and, oh wow, the pain of it all. Just make the work present, make them a present of the work, and keep one's miseries out of it. They are there, quite sufficiently in these heady days of self-expression, and an audience, even a university audience trained by the deaf, dumb and blind, will sense it in the words, where everything belongs.

Sez R. Kelly the other day: "The only way is ode, mel- at them. gush the honey in & hope they'll have sense enough to lick it up." Lorine Niedecker, at her end, took great care that she did precisely that. Those 12,000 non-sun-flowery young of Kansas have never heard of her. Their teachers don't know the names and uses of poets either. Mr. Havens comes to town and snows them with crap. Poets were always the first to go -- both before and after the Revolution. If Bob Hope had come to Hoch Auditorium and been as boring and arrogant as Richie Havens, they would have burned the place down. But what to do: if the young don't know the difference between shit and wild honey? Answer: keep making honey.

Love, and keep thee warme and well.

Jonathan Williams



(January 26, 1970)

ESHLEMAN:

## Story of the Bull Dog in Winter

You know a great pure bred bull dog weighs nearly 100 pounds. Show models may not have more than 2 sq ins of black in their pelts. Their jaws swing up and once sunk into a bit of flesh must be pryed off for they lock out of control. When their second set of teeth come in the line of their jaw changes and their ears lower.

They are so specially bred for bringing down bulls by the snout that they would become extinct without their breeders (R Kelly's Great Plan?). Their hind quarters now are so small that all are delivered by C-section and so weak that it (pelvis) cannot support the males overdeveloped front quarters for intercourse so the female -- gasp -- must be braced at the abdomen. (A gentleman takes at least 75% of the weight on his elbows) They, bulldogs, sleep about 18 to 20 hours and sometimes must be awakened for meals. When awake they stand still in a room of people not moving but their eyes following EVERY voice. Beware. Sometimes especially in winter they race at trees, head down, 10 mph and leap headlong, all legs streaming back, not unlike a gull, and basho their shoulders thus toughening them up.

They are gentle and when they like you -- it takes about a year -- they will let no harm befall you. They know no fear or pain.

Bull dogs will run at you as they will at a tree, and when you're on ice, that can be awful. The reason they do most of their tree butting in the winter is they seem to like the snow falling from the limbs. The white ones always have a pink snout mask and all of them snore and grunt as they walk for they are ill-shapen for breathing. There is also the problem of flatulence but that is another story.

-- John Shannon

## Local Turf

Re: STEELWORK, by Gilbert Sorrentino, Pantheon, New York, 1970

Gilbert Sorrentino's "passion for delineating his time and environment" has finally brought forth Steelwork, a definitive map (in novelistic guise) of Brooklyn. This geographic "passion" fed by his own commitment to poets like Pound, Williams, and Olson, first found its local roots in the prose of Hubert Selby Jr. published in Neon during the late fifties. Then in the early sixties, Sorrentino guided Last Exit to Brooklyn through the jungles



of Grove Press and welcomed it in Kulchur 13 with a piece containing the above quoted phrase. Selby reciprocated by dedicating his novel "with love, to Gil." Now Sorrentino reciprocates in turn by adding to the terrain explored by Selby the neighborhood in which he grew up, an area bounded by 68th Street and 4th Avenue.

To establish place, rather than character or relationship, as the locus of Steelwork, Sorrentino has curiously inverted the structure of his earlier novel, The Sky Changes. Each segment of that work had been precisely located on a roadmap, as it were, while the novelist investigated the characters' involvement with each other and with the terrain as they rode across the country. This might seem to place it with such geographical works as Edward Dorn's "Idaho Out" or Douglas Woolf's Wall to Wall, but for the husband from Brooklyn who undertakes this continual change of perspective in hopes of saving his rocky marriage, nothing but the sky changes. On the other hand, the driver he has hired to take his family across the country uses his geographical intelligence to provide occasion for knowing his employer's wife more intimately, finally leaving with her and the children after they arrive in San Francisco. The husband returns to the familiar terrain of Brooklyn, his eyes opened only by his wife's confession of her numerous infidelities. In Steelwork, Sorrentino also returns to Brooklyn, but apparently with a temporal rather than spatial perspective. That is, each segment is precisely dated, the earliest 1935, the latest 1951. However, the progression of the novel is a thematic one, with segments juxtaposed because of shared concerns (music, immigrants, alcohol, sex, etc.). The date inscribed may be faithful to the author's sense of when the scene or events rendered actually occurred, but Sorrentino, like the ancient geographer Herodotus whom Carl Ortwin Sauer and Charles Olson so admire, has blurred the sense of time relations to focus attention on the relationship between the events and the physical area in which they took place. This geographic art can handle with great subtlety the old chestnut that naturally intrudes into such novels, i.e., character vs. society. Sorrentino has learned much about this from Last Exit to Brooklyn; indeed, one can say of Steelwork what Sorrentino said in 1963 of Selby's novel, "Important to realize that these people have not wholly been turned into what they are by the society in which they exist--they, in a very real sense, have created this society . . . these people are real because their acts are acts which are utterly true to the environment they inhabit, they explain it, and vice-versa."

The virtues of Selby's third-person omniscient narrator, able to enter any character's consciousness at the appropriate moment without losing the opportunity to pull back and evaluate, have not been lost upon Sorrentino. But the author of Steelwork does not always have Selby's ability to communicate his moral judgment without making direct comments. For example, the reader hardly needs Sorrentino's sour evaluation of Red's Grandma ("Dirty old cunt.") when the mercilessly repetitious sentence structure of that segment ("She chased . . . She rifled . . . She allowed . . ." etc.) clearly exposes her egomania. Also Sorrentino waxes poetic in the opening segment when he invokes "Rimbaud come to their eyes in perfect candor" and "Apollinaire, beckoning them to his fabulous Texas" to render the impact of Charlie Parker's Koko upon two young adolescents. Still, in his first-hand account "Remembrances of Bop in New

York, 1945-1950" (Kulchur 10), Sorrentino's simile for the experience ("as if someone had hit me over the head") is even more inadequate. I guess the best way to present the experience would be to include a recording of Koko with every copy of Steelwork, but in lieu of that Sorrentino might have done better to limit his narrator to the minds of the two listeners, Gibby and Donnie G, as he did in the following passage: "What was the drummer doing? The notes crammed together and released, zipping, glittering. The sound of that bright metal being flailed."

Gibby, we discover by comparing the opening section of Steelwork with Sorrentino's own memories of first hearing Koko, is the young Gilbert Sorrentino. One would hardly suspect this, for Gibby is not a prominent character in the novel, although he is sympathetic and observant. Eddy Beshary, the neighborhood littérateur, is, on first reading, more likely. After all, he reads the dictionary, knows a few French words, speaks in a stilted manner, and compiles an annual ranking of all those who hang out in Yodel's drugstore. But Sorrentino would hardly use a pretentious character like Eddy, insanely involved with words for their own sake and metaphors that pin people down entomologically, as a persona. Also, Sorrentino's subject is Brooklyn, not the artist as young man. He treated Gibby's musical milieu as personal recollection in that Kulchur essay on bop and saw no need, at its conclusion, to develop his "collection of notes" into a book which would "simply be a personal recollection of days that have already been treated historically." Instead, Sorrentino evidently decided to securely grasp his home-base as a geographic entity before venturing, as in The Sky Changes, into unexplored areas. The mature Gibby was the man to recreate that Brooklyn neighborhood, as even Eddy Beshary realized when he ranked him third in the scroll present to Philip Yodel in 1950: "Gibby--A young man of great promise who reads many books. He engages Dr. Pearson in multifarious level conversation also he knows how to spell Parchesi four different ways all, of which are, Correct!!!!"

-- Barry Alpert

Notation on Fielding Dawson's The Black Mountain Book, Croton Press, New York, 1970

Thinking here of Dawson's Black Mountain,  
destruction & creation to keep the material ripe,  
emotioned, how the father's letters to young Fielding  
inundate the material, keep the pulse moving, unseen  
father, not Charley or Franz, the hero  
of the work, controlling, as if God in heaven, that distance  
manifest in the raggedness, the choppiness of the writing,  
stormy sea of prose, wave upon wave a continuity  
tossing, to fix the nail in oak, but its all a-move, a

move to exorcise & reveal, make memorable Fielding's  
 beatingheart, Olson's presence most felt as method,  
 Klein guilt Olson ego, to get the ego into the work,  
 no distance, writing automatic, no "wisdom" outside  
 what on the threshing-floor, in the flurry of the mill of  
 the heart IS MADE,

Black as the Passion of the Mountain,  
 a black  
 mountain,

if Bataille wld reveal his own sexual "disturbance"  
 his work on the erotic could be more felt,

Dawson stands clear,  
 no questions about "him" --

"School" a flurry of the desperate,  
 images, glimpses, contacts, inspiration, to the student a FLURRY,  
 for Dawson there is no history, or history only felt as discontinuous  
 event, baseball diamond more actual than classroom, more energy  
 felt and released there --

spiked baseball with beetle-glyph, to

fix in energy that mountain, his father  
 can, at the end, die if  
 the passion of his dying is  
 within the writing of the book  
 contained

-- C. E.

January 17, 1970

Dear Clayton

Your letter has made me think about certain things these last few days. About poetry, power songs, forces arising in poet-living-communally. Gary wrote I can make up power-songs like crazy. I wish I could send you these songs, somehow set upon the page to create the songs tension and release. Sometimes another singer doctoring the same site will take down the words and sometimes I will remember lines and underlying refrains. In the grand canyon with Nanao I tried to copy the words after each of two songs. I did so hiding the paper and my hand from the campfire lite as if I was trying to touch someplace I shouldn't. And even when I wrote it down to send to you, it was not how it was, tho I remembered what those states were and was made glad. For example, the "beyond Beyond" case, when seen, what do they mean? But if you sing beyond taking several moments and forces shading and undertoning what beyond really

means in this case, vitally, then beyond is part of the score of the song and its use does not interfere in the "poet" who wishes to write "poetry" and has shaped his critical seizing mind to search for a certain arrangement of words, not repeating and avoiding the trite too easily accepted. You know what I mean? I want to make clear what I mean so I try to write poetry so it can be read by someone who does not know the significant associations of who is being spoken of, but who can understand the state spoken from, or feel certain strengths or weaknesses evoked in him thru words, more of a spell or communication than song, which is carried along by the spirit expressed in sound, like humming is, automatically done as your frightened at night by a sound on an unlit trail, to chase away the fear and steady the sight. But words or verses remembered from song appear in songs again and again, and influence or enter in to poems, sometimes disjointedly but often adding a new dimension. For example, last summer, Lowell, a friend, and sweatbath associate of mine, was singing, copying with his own song, and listening and trying to copy some of the words that passed thru me. Song sung was (starting with dawn with "when your cold / it never strikes / you'll soon be warm, or something like that because I was shivering cold. I sang songs like "darkspirits be forewarned of this protected site", "what sorcery" sung with full attention and awareness of sorcery, "just two old indian doctors, slipping. a shade. below. (what is perfect) and of course "Dakini, come under my influence (goddess fall to my power)" which is often sung to have luck in being strong with beautiful women. Months later, Nanao, Lowell and me were waiting to visit the Nigmapa Lama talking about desire. Lowell showed me this poem which was incomprehensible to Nanao, and unclear to many who now understand it. it went:

A veteran stage driver visits an old side kick who  
 rode shotgun on many a windy and scattered  
 transformation of all so obvious as to be imperceptible  
 unless they slipped on each step below  
 further below the shadows of sorcery  
 OH spirits that drive the horses across the horizon,  
 when will I find the strength to go where they lead?  
 What sorcery will bring her under my influence

--Lowell Levant (cäcut)

Now that is a poem it would be difficult for me to sing unless spirit moved. and there is no need to sing it, it can be read.

To return to my own work, and to your questions; yes, I am sending you some new poems of fall and the start of winter. As to the song in the title of one I did send, 'wanting her too much, wanting too much from her' I am still singing it, far from finished, as to 'power mt. footes crossing rd. song.' -- much of it rhymed and the best of it is in the poem starting in the middle and finishing at the end. To add clarity, from what I wrote above on the page before, I also send you a doublespaced attempt at a minimal definition of song. I do not mean that poetry is less magic than song. I wrote a magic personal poem for power

the beginning of last summer and merely to remember a line ended doubt and restored purpose. It went:

Shen Tao was not afraid because he didn't care  
 He didn't try to please, but got around to doing his share  
 He wasn't proud enough to be discontent, but took what came  
 with pleasure; and soon forgot what wasn't there.

But that poem should be sung, when i remember it i sometime hear it sung depending how excited i am, if i'm already "singing", if i'm in trance etc. But I think it's a poem because i wrote it out on a smooth board, i didn't sing it out, and i didn't hear it as a song passing thru me. Yet it is as close to a power song as i can at this time send, unless some of my poems evoke power or spiritual presents inside of you. It depends to you on what you read in a poem. Gary, me, someone else will like and praise something else. Nanao liked Only he sings so well when he heard it that day he demanded a copy, otherwise it would stay in that notebook because i would not be sure its good enough poetry, tho i know that it is all i know, true, spoken thru me based on where i was, what influences at that moment shaped. Yet the poem Load was written moments afterward. Before during and after I was singing the most powerful songs in recent seasons, about love and crying again and again, yet they had no words and only one other person heard, down the mt. a full 1/2 mile away.

Note about, or rethought about attached sheet on Outcry, songs needn't be screamed, for screams are not songs. They are intense, even if almost inaudible. I've heard only a few, but it seems that what i've heard of YONO OKO or Mrs. Lennon are songs expressing such powers. Yet this is not the only intensity for example: "the sun is rising on mansanita hill" an old song title from Midu indian days which became a ritual song sung in almost all of the good sweat baths at Gary's last summer, and the most unlikely people sang the best verses with all singing the refrain, sounds like it could be sung around the campfire. Dylan's song "I shall be released" with all verses can be sung for power. I think i could go on and on, and besides, Only he sings contains what i mean in a poem. The heart sutra is sung by zen freaks for power. If you sing that sutra, filling the emptiness about, you gain more power (i feel) than if it were chanted by a score of monks.

Well, now on to communal living, writer, wanderer, problems. Nanao told me of New Buffalo and the more political Reality Construction Company, and it has been forseen that i will travel to the southwest as a wanderer and hermit, a total nobody and representative of the international bodisatva movement. I don't know Max Finstein, but am in utter sympathy with problems he may have found in communal living. But about the communally life as I have experienced it recently, with the people this summer which will be more perhaps the WEPA commune (now a land association with some of us living in small communes), and now at the Inter. Bodi. Mnt. at chico (an outgrowth of the Stage and contains many members of the coyotlclan and butte creek - supi stageline.) and as certain possibilities we're moving into:

The life of a poet, trying to hear himself think, wanting time to himself, need to

be alone and follow thru, speaker who should say something worth hearing, writer with projects under creation, in a word, an individual person following a particular vision,

then, as balance

the life of shared experience, self reflected feedback, common work unselfishly given to others, ease of common tasks or individual tasks taken on for the ease of others, common reinforcement and criticism, need to be able to assume responsibilities other than to yourself, the act of inhibition of personal pleasure to further group effort, approval, co-operation.

I inhibit easily and do not like to live in houses or share in things not freely given or wanted too much by others, such as space or vibration or affection. To write i must often be alone as i am now, with only my going out for distraction, not distraction and responsibilities to respond to someone coming in at me. It is true i have not been writing as much, but this is not yet a month long camp for me, and here i have the relationship with a woman while i've liked to travel around seeing enlightened leaders and friends as wanderer and stage driver between supernatural sites. Soon spring and the move to wild country. A band roaming freely over a territory they have and will know. My last poem about snowfall is about our territories in butte creek which are better lived in out doors. Snowfall there now.

Our Commune is like many in the Bodisatva Movement. We have "no money" or very little, we work hard most days, we wear cast off clothing, we gather and have for winter gathered fruits and nuts, vegetables from the back of stores, from organic gardens, from canning and preserves we do now and have done, homemade bread, alms from the healthfood store, two houses wrecked beyond renting by bikers on the edge of town we fix up for rent, workshop where we make boxes, sharpen buck (2 man) saws, rooms built into garages, an outer wall, fence, fortification, art expression going up in front on both houses with a single entrance, zazen, rituals, feasts, common garden work in back for spring, wood stoves, bean sprouts, no chemical drugs, and lack of bottlecaps keep us from homemade beer. SunBear and Grey Wolf his sub chief and a squaw (who slept with both of them in my bed) visited last week. He is indian, people give him land, people take survival courses, survivors live on land, and off land, tribally, not a rip off nature, balanced (for his medicine; no drinking at all). He is a hopeful no talk action now bold omen.

Yet there are difficulties. Yesterday Fredda told Jon's dog to be silent, jon got mad and was proud, she withdrew and later we all got together to talk, mt. goat prayed, we gave the 4 vows of zen buddhism.

Also not all of those whom grant me power are present, old packs still true but the makers scattered fulfilling karmas which will reunite us in song and sweat as the rain stops and sun shines, those great ones who are ancestors and descendants of who we are now, not all of them are present, but like the dead they can be sung to life.

Until I respond to your next letter,

Will Staple



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Minimal definition

Spiritual Power expresses Outcry sung screamed whispered  
 confident in power trance which grants the insight  
 the sound of the song comes from a source outside  
 of yourself, is more potent than all the rapidly becoming  
 manifested forces of any mere individual's possibility  
 to produce passion, sung so powerful as to turn the breath  
 inside out force the body to share in the song,  
 beyond any realm of individual personality  
 self-concern remote possibility of inhibition arising  
 certainty strong the body felt not a physical one  
 stillness dance song You  
 do not sing, listen so hard no you except listening  
 then you hear song as from a distance closing in  
 you know this song has been sung and sung  
 you are just now able to hear it like remembered dream  
 and you know that others have known  
 your knowledge is not some idea or  
 personal world  
 in the songs of others you can see if they  
 break breath  
 thru  
 becoming themselves something shared THO  
 HUMAN PERSONALITIES OR LIMITED PERSONALITIES  
 may not be present  
 Elemental Powers, even those you

dare not think about      Burning  
 red transparent stones and ice      rain  
 mixed to make  
 a trapped cloud of fire  
 and song, bodies burnt passed feeling  
 any sorrow, blowing  
 all the pain      out      blowing on all pain      hofire

\*   \*   \*   \*   \*   \*   \*   \*   \*   \*   \*   \*   \*

(today is Artaud's daughter's  
 birthday .

dear Clayton

I hope you got the last batch of poems. Here are a few more written not long ago. the poem eternity i just found and like as well as motionless hours alone, i mean, i like that one as well. the others may or may not be liked, not much time for reflection yet on them. up to yours.

i do want to say a few words to the many i have already said about power songs, not that i have not said enough, perhaps too much, not knowing where you are makes it a little hard but the burden should and does fall to me to make clear. if i can make something i've written about them clearer i will hope to, as sometimes my letters have a certain quality of an unproofwritten first draft, sometimes hasty things are said in my excitement to point at the truth, where temporary errors and examples are made, but the truth remains true. Spiritual matters are not so much beyond words as beyond the critical judgemental mind, so important to your work and to a certain type of highly polished poetry. But the spirit can not be caught in some technically perfect trap. Not that poems do not express spiritual levels, but they are written and that of course implies a whole life style, culture, clean paper, other poetry, past, progressions, poet groups and mastership, better poets than others, tables, lites to read by, this typewriter, money to send this letter, much much more. As a Singer, doctor in the west-south west indian tradition, life is perhaps more real than rent, new tires, food that can be bought. I see myself transform as time in the wilds yields a new and renewed spiritual awakening. Of my life then, awe and profound respect is all that can touch it. We often speak very little or no english, we often do not speak but talk from the heart more deeply than words. Those of the clan know, and must know. When in rituals it is their turn, they



must even know things that they can never learn, that has never been spoken of or taught, and life sometimes depends on how well they are worthy of trust... To show you what i mean you would have to give up too much, but still i give an example. When you enter the sweat lodge already heated and in the process of being doctored, there is a ritual you must go thru, no one can see you but they can hear your songs and when they sing at a certain time you too must sing the same song without ever having heard it before, more than that those doctors can even see your intentions and depth, so the spirit must be pure, everyone's alike, or they might think you don't belong, are some spy, or wish actual harm of that which they wished cured, if so, and the ritual fails in its aim, who do you think they will blame, what do you think they will do to you, remember, there are no human beings there, nothing to protect you but the purest sincerity and knowledge of power, granted often by our common ancestor, Coyotl.

That is why it may be no good to talk of songs, only poetry. Perhaps if it is your time this life you will hear songs, then you will know that they do not come from inside or anyone, nor is there any outside for power to arrive from, words and discrimination must be opened if we are to really hear.

Will Coyotl S.

[/ Note: the following letter was written by Stan Brakhage to Sally Dixon at the Carnegie Institute in Pittsburgh. She passed it on to me, suggesting it be run in Caterpillar "as a bringing full circle his ((Brakhage's)) series on directors, as an epilogue in a sense, a tracing, through many men and also THIS man of that given creative thrust." Mrs. Dixon also explains that she received the letter from Brakhage after he returned to Denver from making a film in Pittsburgh in a hospital -- she says: "We met with obstacles at every stage of this project from the initial inquiring to the final break in the processing equipment. On the heels of that the last 5 rolls of film dribbled in at a torturously slow pace. Enough to break the spirit of even an extraordinary man or at least give him serious cause to doubt his chosen path." -- C. E. ]

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(March 2, 1971

Dear Sally,

I had thought to call you tonight and let you know that 1800 feet of the film had finally dribbled into Western Cine, 600 feet yesterday, 1200 feet today, some of it 4th class, some 3rd, some Air Mail, but finally all (but 400 feet) safely arrived: I could have kissed even the guy who mailed it (Sen is it?) because I was THAT relieved it had at least arrived (tho' I still worry about the

postoffice putting 4th class ANYwhere, including radiators, in the sun etc.: but now there's no point calling you with this happy news because Western Cine just phoned me that a ball bearing got stuck THIS particular day's processing and that some (they don't know how much, maybe ALL) this footage was damaged, some completely destroyed. I honestly don't know how I'll survive the night: I write because I am too upset to do ANYthing else but punch these keys in horrible frustration. Jane says: "Let the angels have their way, do their editing." I keep trying to trust that: I had managed to trust that, even say something similar to you when you were crying on the phone last Saturday because of the way the film was mailed: but now, somehow, I've been thrown up and then down too quickly to catch any breath of hope. This whole project has exhausted me more than anything else I've attempted. I'm still having nightmares about the open-heart surgery: last night was the first full night's sleep without such terror. One dream found me in a hill town (a cross between Bisbee Arizona, of my childhood, and Pittsburgh) among friends desperately attempting something seeming failing: and I, in the dream, was running out of Skoal Snuff, down to half a box, wondering how I'd manage to continue whatever-it-is-we-are-doing with so little snuff left: I thought then, in the dream, of giving up my chewing habit but decided against it: then, on opening the dream-box of snuff, I discovered that there were tiny white worms spread all thru the tobacco leaves; substance, raking worms aside, only to uncover a beating heart in the bottom of the box. In another dream a midget man dressed all in white was ordering me to do something, seemed to have power over me, and finally ordering me to pass thru a network of stainless steel poles: my chest couldn't make it: I was gasping for breath: he was screaming at me. And so the dreams went, torturing even small naps. It began to seem desperately crucial to SEE THAT FILM, something desperate beyond any measure of what I might, further, do to it: something in all this I've got to face, something personal almost beyond belief. Maybe that's the trouble, that my desperation becomes 'beyond belief'. Maybe that's the trouble with my whole spiritually tortured life: you see, I know that angels make no sense whatsoever without demons in contradistinction. I know one cannot lean on faith anymore than one can lean on the U. S. Mail Service. I'm now, tonight, exhausted with the whole process of creation from its very beginning in me, completely exhausted with this particular film, and as tortured as I've ever been inasmuch as I canNOT let ANY of this wide-world GO, and cannot either LIVE except thru the specificity of creation, nor create except thru the ephemerality of film: I am trapped in a mass of confusions and haven't one single Pollyannaism left. This is a spilling-the-guts letter: and I feel free to do thus inasmuch as I WILL phone you and let you know the 'good' or 'bad' news long before you receive this. This is then the track-of-tonight, the lowest moment I can remember. They say that they 'break' prisoners under interrogation by offering them 'relief' from torture and then taking that 'relief' away from them.

I think that these difficulties I'm experiencing are those which are seldom referred-to in writings by or on Artists and their workings: for these conditions are the UNglorious ones we share with all human beings. The specific terror for an artist is that he KNOWS he canNOT succeed without some

form of angelic intervention: he KNOWS that creation is completely dependent upon forces beyond his control. He also knows that he is so premised upon the necessity to create that he cannot possibly survive, nor remain half-way sane, unless that process of angels, Muses, Gods, sub-consciousness, what-have-you, manage to pull it/art off thru him. I actually feel madness scratching at the back of my mind, fingernails of it in the hollow of my skull; and I think this too romantically put (as if I was clutching for company from a host of 19th century Artists) to do justice to the feeling of it. I type frantically here to bury the sound of dust-motes landing on the table bulb beside me.

I have had to believe, all these years, that this gift to be able to create were MORE than a life and death matter with me, that it was some specificity arrived-at by way of myself which concerned all life on earth. I have nurtured it as if it were the substance of life itself given momentarily into my hands. I have struggled to get it out of these hands of mine, once shaped/contained, yet clearly visible, into the surrounding air, the eye of The World. I have kept it clear to myself that I am no more than a canning factory (in competition with Mr. Heinz himself, it it come to that!), or a farmer, say, as I stumble along thrashing about with my camera. I have taken it, this gift of the ability to create, as a trust. But I am, these days, as all artists in this society, stuck with that same impass which makes The Farmer a businessman rather than One Who Receives The Gifts of The Earth, makes canning factories Poisoners rather than Kings, in the sense of Kingship: He Who Distributes. I fight to maintain the conditions most open to creation, yet my whole life is inevitably sucked-up into Politics, speech-making, teaching, writing, ALL activities which damage the creative process. "Rather it be damaged", I say, "than destroyed outright", continuing as best I'm able to manage survival and still clear space in Time and in my mind for the auras of utter uselessness where the visions of creative instruction flourish. The voices the poets attend, the visions the painters and film. makers depend upon, these (which can be called cosmic signals) exist in NOtime, nowhere: thus, if one cannot literally clear enough space of Time so that all attention to it can cease, the voices and visions cannot speak! I KNOW I managed it, in that damn hospital, with ALL its specificity of place and timeliness: I managed to lose ALL sense of time and, mostly, sense of place as well. I managed it because the shock of being open to so much wretchedness obliterated all but those sensibilities possible to immortality: either be shocked to death or beyond it to the endless realms of revelation -- THIS the instruction I could trust from my whole life's work in Art. And how wonderful that I can, then as always, trust MOST so mundane a sign of success as a streak of sweat down the cheek, followed by another, and another from under the armpit, the crotch, the BACK of the head, the TOP (most clear sign of all): would it be too effete to speak of a 'quality of sweat'?: suffice it to say, I've learned the signs and have come to have good reason to trust them. But then there is a BIG/little and very EXACT/unspecific WORLD out there beyond that difficult state of creation: it marshalls almost all its forces against any such cosmic escape -- no, NOT 'escape' ...cosmic inscape -- any such cosmic inscape as The Artist, for instance, is absolutely dependent upon. Many people have asked me why it is that Artists seem to live most individually in this Time

and to have EScaped the social machine now chewing up almost everybody else, except perhaps gangsters (of the '30s style) and revolutionaries: it is, I think, simply because the Artist cannot function at all without this cosmic awareness (for lack of a better term), this very awareness which the whole total Social Machine is set to destroy utterly on earth, its antiseptic needlepoint the brunt of Politics itself: The Artist has no choice in the matter: he either evades Time and Place and Type etc., or else he ceases to make and, most often, then dies. Thus he STANDS for the last outpost of that whole proclivity in being human, that whole proclivity which would merge with all animal, stars, rocks, dust of them, and wave-particles (and all other such nebulosities as cannot even be referred to as having-been and/or always-being and/or even so loosely self-conscious a word as 'being').

But what a sorry mess I am to write of these things in midst of feeling anything but them. It is, then, at best a prayer. If it is your will, destroy this film and/or let it be destroyed by some natural process of demonology. Otherwise, I will trust whatever state it is when it arrives, NOT trust on faith (interesting Freudslip) -- yes, not trust Father NOR Faith . . . but rather, as always, look to SEE what all previous seeing and Post Offices and Processing machines have wrought... rather to SEE what it has become until my sweat runs down, as when shooting, and my sense of all before is obliterated in whatever utterly useless track of chemicals on celluloid is left to me.

I resist editing these days, as you know, because -- ah well, I would have the visions fresh off the farm, if possible... have come to distrust the impositions of historical aesthetics -- distrust all but the most homestyle canning most lovingly prepared: (not that they can't poison you too but that they aren't deceptively poison, and totally thus, as most of the rest: it is not fear of death which makes one opposed to factories but, rather, the blasphemy involved ultimately in ALL commerce as we have created it in our time).

What will I have to look at tomorrow: I shall not sleep tonight: but what is that, finally. Yes, I've talked myself into 'taking it' via writing this letter: but, then, what other choice did I have? I have one hope, like a small but very familiar raft in a stormy sea: faulty processing has OFTEN given me visions beyond anything I had been given while photographing. All of the above process (which I remind myself about in writing it to you), my yielding to that process (which is, finally, so simple a thing as being true to myself), all my yield then into the realm of uselessness and timelessness has enabled me to SEE what the lab sent back to me rather than to insist upon what I thought I had when photographing AND to accept getting nothing back at all. But I have HAD so much hope for this film: this final blow (especially that Western Cine called me tonight when, in fact, they won't know specifics of destruction or whatever until tomorrow) was perhaps happily aimed to BREAK me ENTIRELY from the whole process of photographing -- (end my nightmares too, please, if that be so...) I cannot help but wish, now, that the faulty processing will grow a vision of its own: I have some good reason to hope for that (a hope that should do no harm to the process because I cannot possibly PREimagine what it would be).

I recently shot a roll of Ken Jacobs and Flo and Nisi in which they struggled to extricate the child from a trapping toy dept., one of those ridiculously expensive kinds in an airport: this film was "ruined" in processing because some technician opened the door at the 'wrong' moment: I couldn't bring myself to look at the film for months; and I finally managed to do so the night before I left for Pittsburgh: the rythmic light 'frames' were marvelous and set up all kinds of possibilities in my imagination for further working, thru print re-printing in the lab.: I 'smell' a great new envisionment of Light itself via this little film, if it be one. As a matter of fact, I'm going to stop typing now and go look at it again -- there were some things in it I remember that possibly... I do NOT trust it yet... I will not, probably, trust it even to beginning to think of it as a possible film until I have seen it a hundred times -- might as well begin looking now.

Blessings,

Stan Brakhage

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The photographs of George Herms' work were taken by Wallace Berman.  
The photographs of R.B. Kitaj's screenprints were taken by John C. Ward.

# BOOKS RECEIVED

- GEORGE, VANCOUVER, a discovery poem, by George Bowering,  
Weed/Flower Press, Toronto, 1970, NPL.
- GENERATIONS, poems by Sam Cornish, Beacon Press, Mass., 1971, \$5.95.
- SELECTED LETTERS OF EZRA POUND 1907-1941, edited by D.D. Paige,  
New Directions, N.Y., 1971, \$2.95.
- ST. MARTIN'S by Robert Creeley, Black Sparrow Press, L.A., 1970, NPL.
- POST OFFICE, a novel by Charles Bukowski, Black Sparrow Press, L.A.,  
1971, NPL.
- ON BARBARA'S SHORE, by Diane Wakoski, Black Sparrow Press, L.A.,  
1971, NPL.
- GREED, Parts 5-7, by Diane Wakoski, Black Sparrow Press, L.A., 1971,  
NPL.
- PLACES TO GO, by Joanne Kyger, Black Sparrow Press, L.A., 1970,  
NPL.
- THREADS, by David Bromige, Black Sparrow Press, L.A., 1970, NPL.
- CALIFORNIA POEMS, by James Koller, Black Sparrow Press, L.A., 1971,  
NPL.
- GREEN, by Tom Clark, Black Sparrow Press, L.A., 1971, NPL.
- BACK ROADS TO FAR PLACES, by Lawrence Ferlinghetti, New Directions,  
N.Y., 1971, \$1.50.
- THE BOOK OF PEACE, by Richard Shannon, Doubleday, N.Y., 1971, \$6.00.
- SOME GROUND, by Carl Thayer, Modine Gunch Press, Wisconsin, 1970, \$.25.
- THE GALLERY GOERS, by Raymond DiPalma, Ithaca House, N.Y., 1971, \$1.50.
- HEAVED FROM THE EARTH, poems by Besmirl Brigham, Alfred A. Knopf,  
N.Y., 1970, \$4.95.
- THE FAR FIELD, last poems by Theodore Roethke, Doubleday Anchor, N.Y.  
1971, \$1.95.
- SELECTED WRITINGS, GUILLAUME APOLLINAIRE, trans. by Roger Shattuck,  
New Directions, N.Y. 1971, \$2.75.
- ELEGIAC FEELINGS AMERICAN, by Gregory Corso, New Directions, N.Y.,  
1970, \$2.25.
- SOFT TOUCH, by Mary Carey, Snazzy Wah Press, 1970, Washington, NPL.
- MOVING POSTURES, by Keith Abbott, Snazzy Wah Press, 1970, Washington,  
NPL.
- NO PLACE FOR HIDING, by John L'Heureux, Doubleday, N.Y., hardcover  
\$4.50, pb. \$1.95, 1971.
- THE BLACK AESTHETIC, edited by Addison Gayle, Jr., Doubleday, 1971, N.Y.,  
\$8.95.
- CHIC DEATH POEMS, by Gerard Malanga, Pym-Randall, 1971, Mass., signed  
ed. \$15.00, hardcover \$6.50, pb. \$3.00.
- GEODE/ROCK BODY, by Gretel Ehrlich, Capricorn Press, Santa Barbara,  
1970, NPL.



- NOT ME & other poems by Tim Hildebrand, Modine Gunch, Wisc., 1970, \$.25.
- TO PAINT THE PORTRAIT OF A BIRD, by Jacques Prévert, trans. by Lawrence Ferlinghetti, illustrat. by Elsa Henriquez, Doubleday for Young readers, N. Y., 1971, \$3.95.
- I AM A MAN Ode to Martin Luther King, Jr., by Eve Merriam, Doubleday for Young readers, N. Y. 1971, \$3.95.
- SPRING & ALL, by William Carlos Williams, Frontier Press, 1970, \$2.00.
- HISTORIC HIGHWAYS OF AMERICA VOL. I, Paths of the Mound-Building Indians & Great Game Animals, by Archer Butler Hulbert, Frontier Press, 1967, NPL.
- THE BOOK OF DANIEL DREW, Introduction by Ed Dorn, Frontier Press, 1969 \$3.50.
- YEARS OF MADNESS, a reappraisal of the civil war, by W. E. Woodward, Frontier Press, 1967, \$3.25.
- TWENTY-FOUR LOVE SONGS, by Edward Dorn, Frontier Press, 1969, NPL.
- IF HE CAN MAKE HER SO, by Haniel Long, Frontier Press, 1968, \$3.00.
- THE MIST MEN and other poems, by George Mendoza, Doubleday, 1970, N. Y., \$3.95, Library ed. +.75.
- POETRY IS, by Ted Hughes, Doubleday, 1970, N. Y., Hardcover \$3.95, Pb. \$1.95, Library ed. +.75.
- STONED GLOVES, by Roy Kiyooka, The Coach House Press, 1970, Toronto, \$3.50.
- THE GOLDEN CHAIN, lyrical poems 1964-69 by Peter Russell, pub. by author, Venice, Italy 1970, signed ed. \$15.00, standard ed. \$5.00.
- THE HANGED KNIFE & other poems by Stuart Peterfreund, Ithaca House, 1970, N. Y., NPL.
- QUIET POWER, poems of faith and hope, laughter and love by Helen Lowrie Marshall, Doubleday, N. Y., 1970, \$1.95.
- THE WIFE OF WINTER, by Michael Dennis Brown, Chas. Scribner's Sons, N. Y., 1970, \$4.95.
- EZRA POUND: SELECTED CANTOS, New Directions, N. Y., 1970, \$1.95.
- COLLECTING EVIDENCE, by Hugh Seidman, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1970, \$1.75.
- BY DAYLIGHT AND IN DREAM, by John Hall Wheelock, Chas. Scribner's Sons, N. Y., 1970, \$6.95.
- DOCTOR GENEROSITY'S ALMANAC: 17 Poets, Dr. Generosity Press, N. Y. 1970, NPL.
- THE DOORLESS DOOR, by John Tagliabue, A Mushinsha Book, Grossman Publishers, N. Y., 1970, \$10.00.
- THE BLOOM OF THE AIR, by Philip Lamantia, The Four Seasons Foundation, San Francisco, 1970, \$2.25.
- SEVERANCE PAY: POEMS 1967-1969, by Philip Whalen, The Four Seasons Foundation, San Francisco, 1970, \$2.50.
- CHRISTINAS WORLD, IM(MEDIA)CY POEMWORKS, by Gerard Malanga, Poetry on Films, inc., 1970, NPL.
- FLUX & REFLUX, by Douglas Blazek, Oyez Press, Berkeley, 1970, \$2.50.
- ASPLEY GUISE, by Peter Clothier, The Red Hill Press, Ca., 1970, \$1.00.
- COMMUNION, by Paul Vangelisti, The Red Hill Press, Ca., 1970, NPL.

- FINGERS IN THE DOOR AND OTHER STORIES, by Frank Tuohy, Chas. Scribner's Sons, N. Y., 1970, \$5.95.
- SELF INTERVIEWS, by James Dickey, Doubleday, 1970, N. Y., \$5.95.
- SCENES ALONG THE ROAD, Photographs of the Desolation Angels 1944-1960, compiled by Ann Charters, Portents/Gotham Book Mart, N. Y., 1970, NPL.
- OTHER THINGS & THE AARDVARK, by Eugene McCarthy, Doubleday, N. Y. 1968, NPL.
- MOTHER-A NOVEL OF THE REVOLUTION, by Pamela Millward, Four Seasons Foundation, San Francisco, 1970, \$2.00.
- FIVE READINGS OF OLSON'S MAXIMUS, by Frank Davey, Beaver Kosmos Folio #2, 1968, 1970, NPL.
- A FOOL'S LIFE by Akutagawa Ryunosuke, translated by Will Petersen with etchings by Tanaka Ryokei, A Mushinsha Book, Grossman Publishers, N. Y., 1970, \$10.00.
- REGARDING WAVE, by Gary Snyder, New Directions, N. Y., 1970, \$4.75.
- THE MEXICAN NIGHT, by Lawrence Ferlinghetti, New Directions, N. Y., 1970, \$1.50.
- FOR YOU, by Hayden Carruth, New Directions, N. Y., 1970, \$5.95.
- CABEZA DE VACA, by Haniel Long, Frontier Press, 1969, \$3.00.
- LENZ GEORG BÜCHNER, trans. by Michael Hamburger, Frontier Press, 1969, \$1.00.
- SCENES OF LIFE AT THE CAPITAL, by Philip Whalen, Maya Quarto Ten, 1970, NPL.
- THE DECLINE & FALL OF THE "SPECTACULAR" COMMODITY-ECONOMY, Frontier Pamphlet #1, \$ .50.
- THE DANCE OF THE MINOTAUR, by Leighton Steele, Capricorn Press, 1970, Santa Barbara, NPL.
- TOWARD SKILES, by Bill Henkin, Rain-Wilmette, Ill., 1970, NPL.
- REVOLUTION & other poems by Julia Vinograd, Oyez, Berkeley, \$2.00.
- WISHES, LIES & DREAMS teaching children to write poetry by Kenneth Koch, Chelsea House Publishers, N. Y., 1970, \$7.95.
- THE POETRY OF THE NEGRO 1946-1970, edited by Langston Hughes and Arna Bontemps, Doubleday, N. Y., 1970, \$8.95.
- BEARINGS, by Clayton Eshleman, Capricorn Press, Santa Barbara, 1971, Hardcover \$6.50, Pb. \$2.00.
- TRIBUNALS, Passages 31-35, by Robert Duncan, Black Sparrow Press, 1970, NPL.
- GALLOWSONGS (after Christian Morgenstern) Versions by Jess, Black Sparrow Press, 1970, NPL.
- GREEN GRASS, BLUE SKY, WHITE HOUSE, by Wright Morris, Black Sparrow Press, 1970, NPL.
- 10 POEMS FOR 10 POETS, by Gerard Malanga, Black Sparrow Press, 1970, NPL.
- 40 POEMS TOUCHING ON RECENT AMERICAN HISTORY, by Robert Bly, Beacon Press, Boston, 1970, \$5.95.
- ARE YOU READY MARY BAKER EDDY, by Bill Knott and James Tate, Cloud Marauder Press, Berkeley, 1970, \$2.00.



- THE CRYSTAL MOUNTAIN, by Peter Whigham, Sand Dollar Press, Berkeley, 1970, NPL.
- OH, I'D SING ALRIGHT, poems by Kell Robertson, The Grasshopper Press, Albuquerque, 1970, \$1.50.
- SURFING OFF THE ARK (1965-1969) poems by Bill Pearlman, The Grasshopper Press, Albuquerque, 1970, \$1.50.
- SUN ROCK MAN, by Cid Corman, New Directions, N.Y., 1970, \$1.75.
- GREYSTONE POEMS, by Bill Bathurst, Maya Quarto Eleven/1970, NPL.
- BABALON 156, by Harvey Bialy, Sand Dollar Press, Berkeley, 1970, \$4.00.
- THE BLACK MOUNTAIN BOOK, by Fielding Dawson, Croton Press, Ltd., N.Y., 1970, NPL.
- VIEWS 1-7, by Theodore Enslin, Maya Quarto Nine, 1970, NPL.
- OF THE BREATH OF, by Cid Corman, Maya Quarto Twelve, 1970, NPL.
- NIGHT SCHOOL, by David Rosenberg, An Ant's Forefoot Eleventh Finger, Voiceprint Edition, 1970, Essex, England, NPL.
- FORMS PART I - THE FIRST DIMENSIONS, by Theodore Enslin, The Elizabeth Press, N.Y., 1970, NPL.
- SELECTED POEMS OF HERMAN MELVILLE, edited by Robert Penn Warren, Random House, N.Y., 1970, \$8.95.
- UNDER WESTERN EYES, by David Anderson, Siamese Banana Press, N.Y., 1970, NPL.
- THUNDER ROAD, by Hilton Obenzinger, Siamese Banana Press, N.Y., 1970, NPL.
- MADNESS IN LITERATURE (and associated arts), by Keith Cohen, Siamese Banana Press, N.Y. 1970, NPL.
- FAT MAN DANCING, by Peter Barrett, pub. by author, 1970, NPL.
- TRUTH FUZZ 2, by Peter Barrett, 1970, NPL.
- THE CLAY HILL ANTHOLOGY, by Hayden Carruth, The Prairie Press, Iowa City, 1970, \$3.75.
- RUBAIYAT OF OMAR KHAYYAM, trans. by Edward Fitzgerald, Doubleday, N.Y., 1970, \$1.25.
- SAY X, by Donald Schenker, The Print Mint, Berkeley, 1970, \$1.50.
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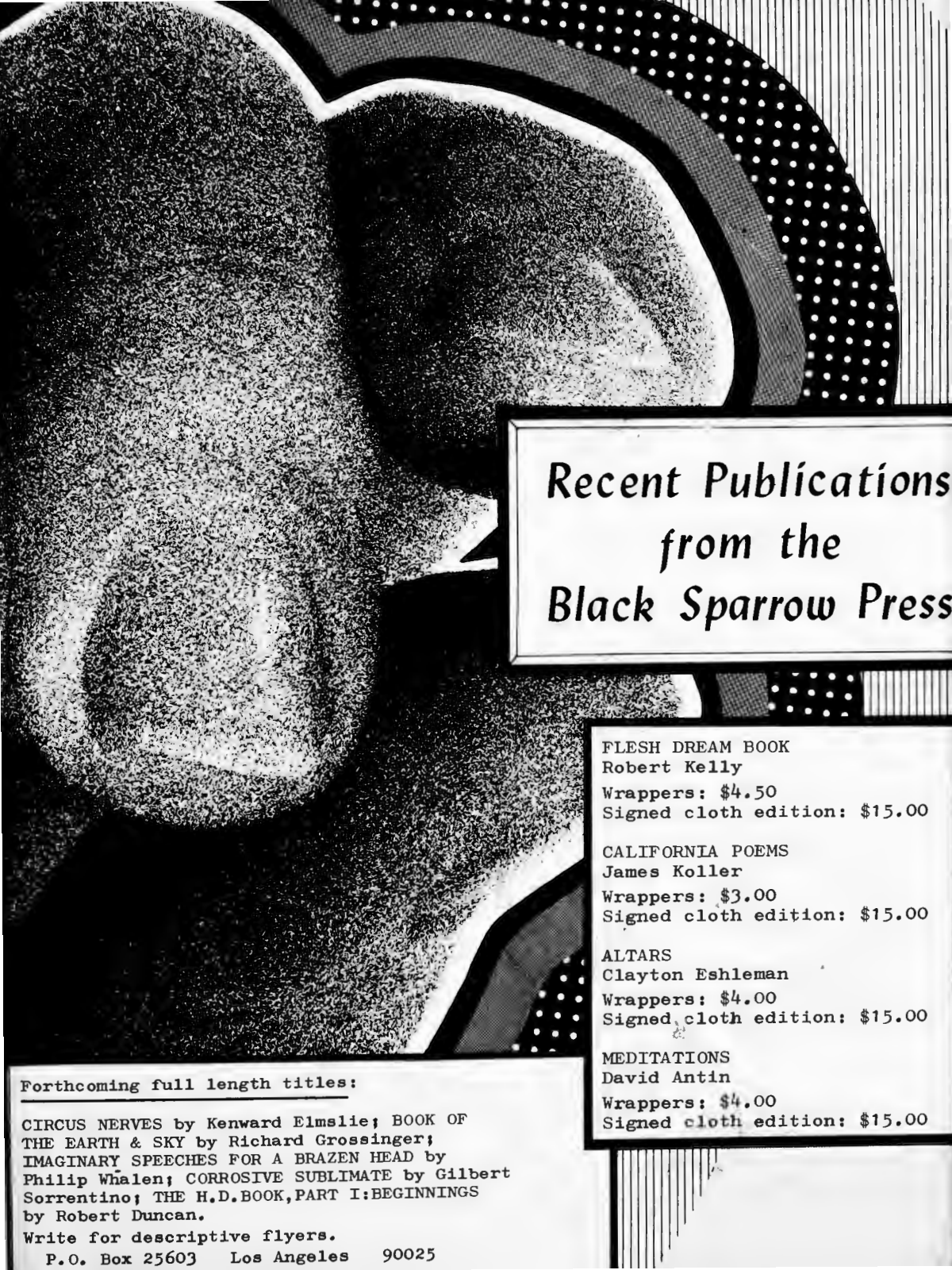
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